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RIGHTS
AND
WRONGS

M. M. GORDON



RIGHTS AND WRONGS:

OR,

BEGIN AT HOME.

BY

M. M. Gordon,

AUTHOR OF "WORK, PLENTY TO DO;" "LADY ELINOR MORDAUNT;" "FASHIONS
OF THE PERIOD;" "THE DOUBLE CURE."



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RIGHTS AND WRONGS.

I.

I HAVE done with the rags, for I've taken the robe
And thrown all my patchwork away ;
With Christ and His righteousness, I am content
To begin with new clothing to-day.

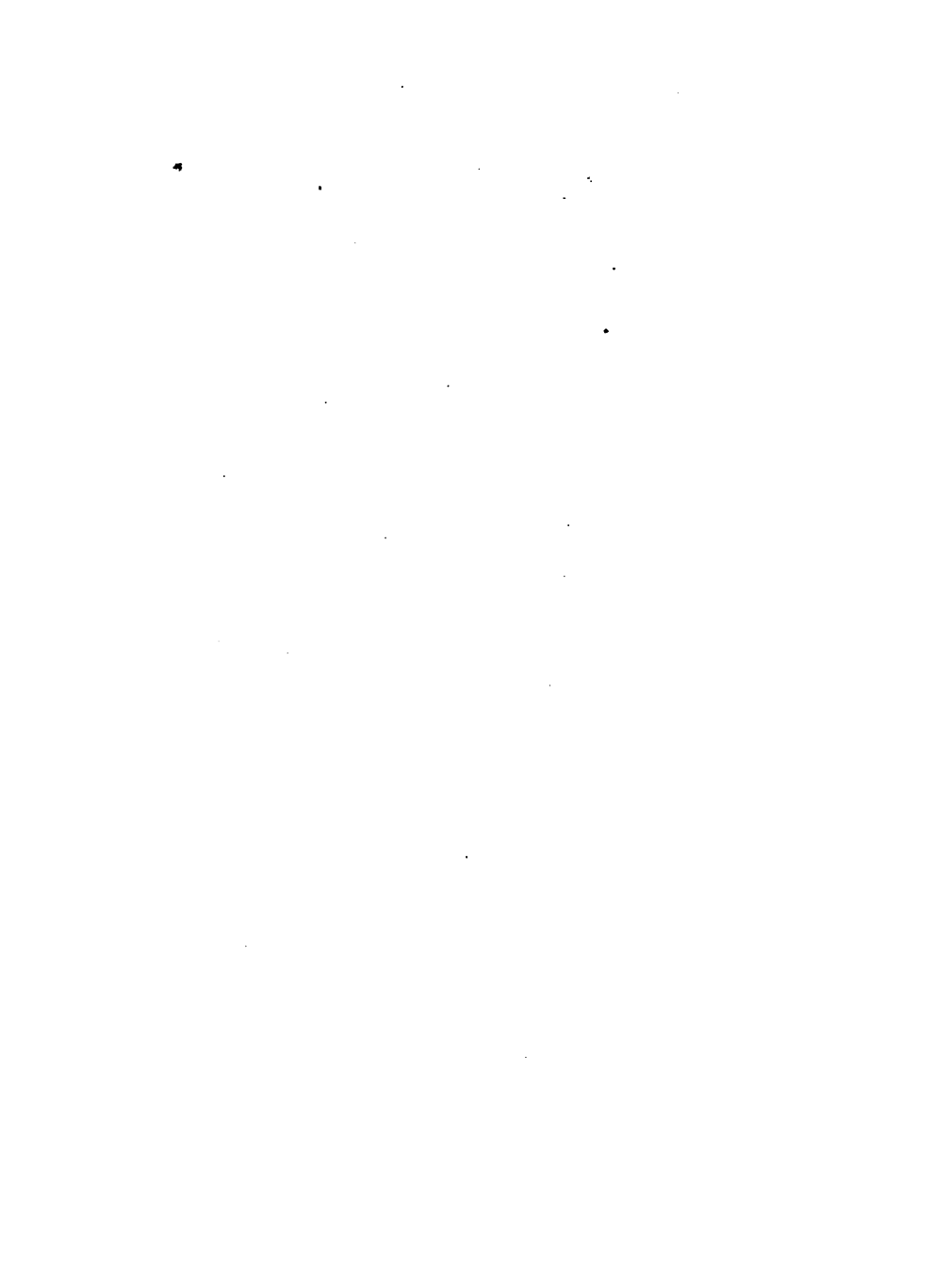
His beauty and comeliness now are made mine ;
O why did I tarry so long,
Ere taking the glorious gift of His grace,
And making its riches my song ?

With something of Christ, yet more of myself,
I thought I should surely succeed ;
Till Christ and the Blood of His cross were reveal'd,
As meeting my uttermost need.

A Blood that could cleanse, and a covering too—
A Righteousness God could accept ;
Could this be refus'd in the pride of my heart,
And my own all in tatters be kept ?

Away, then, with rags, for I've taken the robe
My Father beholds with delight ;
In which, without blemish, I ever shall stand
Belov'd and approv'd in His sight.

A. M. H.



I.

THE BEGINNING.

"I am the beginning."—Rev. xxii. 13.

"He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."—Isa. lxi. 10. •

THE substance of some of these chapters was spoken to dear cottage mothers gathered together in Aberdeenshire. Others were printed, though not published, in a little periodical called the *SUNBEAM*, circulated in country districts some years ago. Several excellent and characteristic ones, with the signature "Avus," were written for the same small work by one who has since finished his course with joy. "Robert Paul," a well-known name in Scottish circles of Christian work, was one who, in the midst of a busy working-day life, as the manager of a large bank in Edinburgh, ever kept his face "steadfastly set towards the New Jerusalem," words that were upon his lips a few hours before he obeyed his Lord's call, "Come thou up hither." His quaint original mind and practical views of life and religion were all sanctified to the Master's use. "The Gardoer," "Order in the House," &c., were warmly welcomed by the cottagers for whom they were written, and who felt as if he were a familiar friend

even before they saw his face. Some time before his death he kindly gave permission to publish them in this form. The remaining portions have been added in hopes of forming a suitable series to be read aloud at mothers' meetings in town or country. The great object I have had in view is to exhibit a few of the Rights which we owe to God and our neighbours, and of the Wrongs which are so manifest in our own lives. If each one of us were more habitually to fulfil the one and to mend the other, we should have no time to complain of fanciful Wrongs, and strive after supposed Rights, whatever they may be.

I quite agree with those who think that the Word of God is the best medium for instruction and profit at mothers' meetings; but, at the same time, something more secular is needed wherever part of the time is occupied by sewing and cutting-out, which is often the case, before the Scripture reading begins. It is to meet a want of this kind, often expressed, that I now send this small volume forth. It is not exclusively addressed to mothers, or even to women, in the hope that the hearers may sometimes be able to interest those at home with portions of what they have heard at the meetings. This is good, not only for those who thus hear, but for those who cultivate a habit of attention, and of repeating what they have attended to. A meeting of mothers is a pleasant sight. Their meeting together at all implies, or ought to imply, that they have some care for the souls of their

children—some wish to pray for them as well as to work for them, some purpose to improve in training them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Very weak are these desires in some, but not too weak to be noticed and encouraged by Him who breaketh not the bruised reed, and quencheth not the smoking flax. Many of those who meet in the town mission-room, with its cheerful fire and quiet space, and kind biblewoman and friendly lady superintendent, find it a little haven of rest, compared with the noisy room which is their home. Many have there first met with Him who is the Saviour of the poor and needy, and can say now and for ever, “God bless the mothers’ meeting.” Of one poor widow who went to the mission-room week after week from a London cellar we find it recorded: “She had not attended many meetings before she felt deeply the burden of her sins, and she has for some months past been rejoicing in her Saviour. One day, when she knew that her son was to be in active engagement on the battle-field, she came to the meeting, and, with streaming eyes, asked our special prayers for him. A little later the son wrote home that in the battle-field that day his knapsack was perforated with bullets, and he felt sure that his mother and friends were at that hour praying for him, and that his life was saved in answer to prayer. ‘Oh,’ says the happy mother, ‘what a blessing that meeting has been to me and my children. It was

there that I first gave my heart to the Saviour.’” Another poor mother, who had learned to love God’s Word at these meetings, when on a typhus sick-bed, called the Bible “a *green book*, for there is always something *fresh* in it;”—a touching allusion from one whose eyes in the city depths never rest on green tree or daisied field. A third says, “Oh, I cannot tell you how much I have learned at these meetings about bringing up my children. I can see that they are not so difficult to manage, for now that I am more patient myself, they are learning to be so too.”*

So far I intended to say as a sort of Preface, or “Beginning” to these papers, and while revolving this in my mind the solemn word “Beginning” struck me forcibly. It is of consequence to a book to have a right beginning. It is of consequence, even to a garment, to be begun and shaped well. Everybody knows how difficult it is to get on with a piece of work which has had to be unpicked several times because of its bad commencement. In fact, there is no kind of work which promises to end well, unless it be begun well. How important, then, that a LIFE should have a good beginning! It is a solemn thought for the mother when the first wail of her infant strikes her ear—when it first clamours for its food—when its eyes first clearly notice the light—when its little hand is first firmly clenched in hers.

* Extracted from Mrs. Ranyard’s *Missing-Link Magazine*.

“What sort of beginning has my child’s life?” But there is another thought connected with the life of each of us : unlike the book or the garment, the worst begun life may have the best ending, for it can have an entirely new re-commencement. The misshaped cloth bears traces of the needle and the thread, and the mistaken seams. Not so the new beginning of life, which is called CONVERSION. All the mistakes, all the wretchedness, all the crimes of the past are blotted out* in the wonderful cleansing Fountain of the Blood of Jesus. † This is the only commencement that will do your lives any good now. You may try to mend them, or patch them, or begin them again with a new shape, but it is all of no avail. The old marks and the old sins stand there as visible as ever in the sight of God, nay, even in your own sight, although you may succeed in hiding them from the eyes of your neighbours. To persuade us to patch our old hearts and lives instead of changing them is a favourite device of the enemy. He dreads that “beginning of wisdom,” which alone arises “from the fear of the Lord,” and he hates the new robe of Christ’s righteousness which is freely offered to us without stain or seam.

So dear to our blessed Saviour is this scheme of entire newness of heart and clothing, that he takes as one of his own names, Jesus, the Beginner.‡ And

* Isa. xliv. 22. † Zech. xiii. 1. Rev. i. 5. ‡ Heb. xii. 2 (margin).

again, and often again, "I am Alpha"—I am the "Beginning"—"I make all things new."* It is He, also, who gives that promise which has kept many a desponding, struggling soul from fainting by the way. "He who hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ."† He, too, it is that prompts as well as hears the earliest beginnings of prayer in the soul looking God-wards. When, from the house of Judas, in Damascus, a first prayer was breathed by the persecutor of Tarsus, it was the listening, loving Lord, with "inclined ear," as to David of old, who said, "Behold he prays." When the soul of Daniel was sunk in self-abasement, and his comeliness was turned into corruption, it was the Son of Man who said to him, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the FIRST DAY that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard."‡

I spoke, in a preceding page, of one point in which the Christian's new life is unlike the re-commenced garment. There is yet another point of difference. The apparently best begun lives need a new commencement as well as the worst. There are many women, kindly and good-tempered by nature, who love their husbands and their children, and "do nobody any harm," as they say. They go well through all their daily duties, keep their houses like a "new pin,"

* Rev. xxi. 5—6. † Phil. i. 6.

‡ Compare Daniel x. 5—12 with Rev. i. 13—17.

and go to church regularly. They do not like spirits, and have no temptation to other gross sins. "Our lives have been begun well, are going on well, and are sure to end well," is the secret heart-language of many such respectable well-to-do people. Ah! but, dear friends, if you have not become a new creature in Christ Jesus, your heart and your life need to be changed, just as much as those of the vilest sinners, with this difference, that you are not so likely to be changed, because you do not feel your need of it so much. An apparently good life is of no use at all to your salvation. Christ's good beginning, that is, Conversion, must come first, and then the good life. St. Paul lived a life more (oh, how much more!) just, holy, and unblameable than any of our lives, yet he confessed himself the "chief of sinners,"* saved alone by the blood of Christ Jesus.

There is "no difference"† between the open sinner and the quiet sinner, between the moral sinner and the immoral, as far as safety goes. Each equally have the sin of sins unpardoned in their hearts and lives, for UNBELIEF is the "besetting sin"‡ of all by nature—the root from which every other sin either DOES or MAY spring up and flourish.

There is a blessing which belongs to the very beginning of the rightly-begun Christian course,

* Compare Phil. iii. 4—9, 1 Tim. i. 15. † Rom. iii. 22, 23.

‡ Read Heb. xii. 1, 2, omitting the italics "*us*" and "*our*," which are not in the original.

which is often, however, neither asked nor expected till its close, and then is frequently withheld. Hence, perhaps, it is why the later years and death-beds of old Christians are not always the bright manifestations of grace and glory which they ought to be. I mean the simple full "assurance" that sin *is* forgiven and blotted out by the blood of Jesus Christ. How can we travel comfortably the long rough road if we do not KNOW that we have a friend, and not an enemy, as our guide? How can we fight the long battle, of which conversion is only the commencement, if we are not SURE whether God is fighting for us or against us? How can we work the works of Christ if we are uncertain whether our Master is angry or pacified? It is the "little children" who are told "to assure their hearts before the Lord."* It was to beginners that John wrote "because their sins were forgiven."† Neither need such fear to be presumptuous. The humbling consequences and effects of real heart-assurance of God's real forgiveness we see in these wonderful words: "I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord."‡ "Trust! How could I ever

* 1 John iii. 18, 19. † 1 John ii. 12. ‡ Ezek. xvi, 62, 63.

doubt Him?" was the language of one when first his heart was opened to receive Christ. "I know *now* what to do with my sins," said another, in the beginning of his confidence. "Let him be miserable that can be, for I cannot," said another, who simply accepted Christ. So, likewise, the converted jailer of Thyatira, with his converted household, believed and rejoiced in the same hour of the night. Delay there *may* be between pardon and assurance, but delay there *need not* be; the fault is in us, and our want of understanding the fulness of God's true heart of love to us in Christ Jesus.

Alexander the Great promised to a courtier who had done him service whatever reward he might ask. On the credit of this promise, the favourite presented an exorbitant demand on the Treasury. The treasurer, astonished, took the order to his master. Alexander replied: "This proves his trust in my affection and my liberality; PAY IT."

Each of us feeble women, poor and needy, whether in mansion or cellar, have a King and a Treasury, and the more believing and the larger our demands, the more help, comfort, and joy shall we receive.

"Thou art coming to a King,
Large petitions with thee bring:
For His grace and power are such,
None can ever ask too much."

.

II.

Ye speak not by the likeness
To Jesus' living face;
Ye speak not by the meekness
Of His sweet and lowly grace.
Why speak not thus of JESUS?

Ye speak not by the beauty
Of a holiness divine,
Nor by the happy sunshine,
Which might be ever thine.
Why speak not thus of JESUS?

Ye speak not by the lovingness
Of those who live by Love;
Ye speak not by the gentleness
Of the lamb and of the dove.
Speak to me thus of JESUS.

Ye speak not by the boldness
Of grace in daily need;
Ye speak not by the fervour
Of all your daily deed.
Speak to me thus of JESUS.

Ye speak not by the Spirit,
In glance, and thought, and word;
Nor by the quiet wisdom,
Which cometh from the Lord.
Speak to me thus of JESUS.

M. M. G.

II.

PROFESSION AND PRACTICE.

“Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”—Jas. i. 22.

THERE is a mighty movement throughout the land. The Spirit of God has been and is still moving upon the dark wild waters of society. From church and chapel, from street and field, from theatre and mission hall, “Let there be light” has been heard in gracious accents, and “there was light.” Many a soul that has long sat in darkness now beholds the Sun of Righteousness. Many a captive, bound in the chains of doubt and fear, has sprung from his **fetters** at the voice of the Lord Jesus, the “Deliverer.” Many a wandering sheep and strayed lamb has found the fold of the Good Shepherd, and leaves it no more. CONVERSION is truly a glorious work, over which we know that the blessed angels of Heaven rejoice, and which all the Lord’s redeemed upon earth must hail with praise and thanksgiving. A noble army of evangelists has sprung up from well nigh every clime, every people, every class, and every denomination. But while we rejoice in their progress, and help them with all our energies, both of prayer and action, let us see that we fully understand, and strive to make

others understand, the nature and consequences of their work. CONVERSION is a birth into life ; but it is not that Christian way of living, which is equally necessary to bring glory to the Saviour, although it gives no salvation. CONVERSION is of itself a great "change of mind," and is, or ought to be, the beginning of as great a change of life—not a change that is seen only at church, or at the prayer meeting—not a change only that fills a soul with ecstasy and rejoicing—not a change only that makes a man his brother's keeper, and sends him forth to win souls. Such changes must be, and will be ; but a more pervading, thorough, and, it may be, a more difficult change is needed—a change at home—in parlour and kitchen—in shop and in field—in temper and in affections—in look and in manner—in the whole being. Converted husbands ought to be more gentle, more kindly and encouraging, as well as more sober and hard-working. Converted wives ought to be more cheerful, more orderly, with more sunbeams in their faces as well as in their hearts. Converted mothers ought to have their children better washed, and combed, and clothed without, as well as in better training within. Converted children ought to be known by better-learned lessons, kinder voices to brothers and sisters and companions, more helpful hands for poor toiling mothers. Converted shop-keepers ought to determine that, whatever others may do, their "weights and measures," both of goods to

customers, and time and work to young men and maidens, shall be such as to "delight the Lord."* Converted servants ought to be blessings instead of discomforts to masters and mistresses, doing all their service "heartily as to the Lord and not unto men." Their dinners should be better cooked, their linen better "dressed," their management more economical, their gardens and their horses better tended than those of the servants who serve *not* the Lord Christ.

These things *ought* to be at all times, and very specially should it be so after a time of revival. Then all the enemies of the Cross—seen and unseen—are on the watch to make us "offenders for a word, and to turn aside the just for a thing of nought."† But let us not give them real cause to exult over us; let us not put a real weapon into their hands, as do many Christians, who thereupon claim the blessing of the "persecuted," forgetting the lesson pressed home to us by the Apostle Peter, "For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for *your faults*, ye shall take it patiently, but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, **THIS** is acceptable with God."‡ Much of fashion and custom and instrument worship mixes, alas! with the conversion work of the present day—much dross remains with the real silver—much water is mingled with the real wine—much profession made

* Prov. xi. 1. † Isaiah xxix. 20, 21. ‡ 1 Peter ii. 19, 20.

only "because of the precepts of men," which never stands the fire, but is as wood and hay and stubble. It is not only the enemies of the Cross who are to be considered; there are many weak souls, honest but doubting, to whom the inconsistencies of Christians, the wide gap between Profession and Practice, are fearful stumbling-blocks in the way to Zion. Oh, to have such discouraged souls able to say, in daily life, of their Christian neighbours, "It has been good for us that these have been on the mount with Jesus." Oh, to have Christian neighbours fully alive to the danger of acting "as screens between souls and Christ!"—and rather striving with the Apostle to "magnify Christ," *i.e.*, to make Him greater in the estimation of others by our conduct in life and death.*

It is remarkable how often in the Word of God example, as well as precept, is inculcated, and how pressed upon us it is to *show* as well as to *sound*. The High Priest—the type of Jesus, of whom again we, as "priests unto God," are to be the living likenesses—was not alone to be decorated with golden, clear-tongued bells, which all around might hear, but beautiful woven-work and pomegranates of blue and scarlet were to delight the eyes of the beholders.† The words of the Lord to Israel were not to be talked of only, but they were to be bound as signs upon the hand, and as frontlets between the eyes, that all might SEE as well as HEAR that these were the

* Phil. i. 20. † Exodus xxviii. 33, 35.

ransomed of the Lord.* No visible tongue, no actual words, have the heavens and the firmament, yet "day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge;" their voices are so loud and real "that there is no speech nor language where they are not heard. Their rule (or precept) is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world."† Like these bright intelligences which roll on their way with us and around us, the lives of the converted should be full of visible speech, of speech-like actions, of voiceless language. "Whose life lightens, his word thunders," says the old Spanish proverb; or let us listen to better words: "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you, let him SHEW out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom."‡ "In all things SHEWING thyself a pattern of good works." "Exhort servants to SHEW all good fidelity that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."§

It is often said, "Oh, conversion is everything; convert a man and he is all right; he is sure to act like a Christian." This is not the way of the Bible, however, which, alike in its teaching and its preaching, is full of the simplest, plainest-spoken directions for the daily life and common temptations of converted men and women. It was the Christian servants that Paul warned against "purloining" and "answering

* Deut. vi. 6—9. † Ps. xix. 1—4. ‡ James iii. 13.

§ Titus ii. 7—10.

again." It was to the "justified and sanctified strangers" scattered throughout the lands of the Gentiles that Peter addressed his Lord's commandment, "to abstain from fleshly lusts." It was the godly old women who were thought in danger of taking too "much wine," and the converted young ones who were exhorted to chastity.* Would, indeed, that the Ten Commandments, which adorn the walls of the churches, or are learned by rote in the schools, were written in the inmost heart of every professor of the truth, in every homestead of Great Britain, as a rule of Christian life, though not in themselves life-giving. The Lord Jesus said unto the ruler, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness. Honour thy father and thy mother,—and Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Again, said the Saviour in the Gospel, "Ye are my friends, IF ye do whatsoever I command you." Ah, friends, these are solemn words to all of us. The Lord Jesus Christ proclaims the commandments now in every gathering together of His people. He does not now say, "Thou shalt not—that ye may have life;" but He says, "Thou shalt not—because ye have Life." Yes! He says it to the Christian man in presence of the one glass of

* Titus ii. 3—5.

whiskey; and He says it at the ledger, and behind the little counter; He says it to the young woman in whose ear the tempter is whispering the beginning, only the beginning of sin; and to the poor mother, who does not know where her children's next meal is to come from; and to the injured neighbour, with unkind thoughts in his heart; and to the covetous, in whom are stirring hard thoughts of his own lot,—“Thou shalt not!” But the voice does not stop there. It says, with gentle tones of promise, “Sin shall not have dominion over you”—“My Grace is sufficient for you.” What is so sorely needed amongst us is not more help to resist temptation, for there is plenty of help and strength in Christ Jesus ready for our use; but it is a strong sense of our need of help, and of our utter helplessness; it is a solemn determination to take every movement of the evil thing within us to be washed out afresh in the blood of Jesus, before it stirs up into victory.

Let us then ask and obtain deep views of the evil of any kind or degree of sin in those who profess to have their sins forgiven. “Is it not a little one,” is the language of many a heart, that, on first awaking, saw overwhelmingly the evil of unforgiven sin. To see the evil of forgiven sin is equally necessary, though far more seldom asked for as a gift of that Holy Spirit, whose work is to “convince of sin.” I will close this subject with a very solemn extract on the “sins of Christians.” “Can I touch these hands, which I have been nailing again to the accursed tree,

or feel them touching me again to bless me, without my whole frame thrilling as the voice runs through me, 'Sin no more!' . . . Where, then, ye children of the Light and of the day—ye followers of the Father and of His Son Jesus Christ—where is your peculiar privilege of sinning lightly, and being easily restored? What is there in that sin of yours that should make it lie less heavily on your conscience, and afflict your souls less grievously, than the sins which, when you were of the world, you committed; of which you repented, and for which you sought and obtained forgiveness? Is your sin now less heinous than were your sins then? Are there no aggravations to enhance its guilt, and to stamp with a deeper die its exceeding sinfulness? Does it demand fewer tears and less poignant searchings of heart—less of godly sorrow, less of bitter weeping?"

One help against daily beginnings of sin would be, as an old divine writes, "a fuller occupation of the heart with God." A great many of our discontented, angry, foolish, covetous and vain thoughts (which are as so many eggs of sin) arise from want of better thoughts. Prayer without ceasing would soon cure this state of things. "Ah, but I have no time!" says the mother, who wakes with her limbs as heavy as lead just in time for the long day's work before her. "I have no time," says the stone-breaker, or the ploughman, or the carpenter. No time! There is a traveller's path between earth and

heaven which runs alongside of our daily lives and occupations, which needs "no time" to traverse. We can pray about our children, our neighbours, our temptations, our worries, our daily bread, and need no extra time. We can, with the time we have, turn our walks in the street and the highway—our time over the wash-tub and the mending basket, and the broom and the scrubbing-brush, into blessed times of help and happiness, instead of times of foolish, and depressing, and unprofitable thoughts.

"There are in this loud, stunning tide
Of human care and crime,
With whom the melodies abide
Of the everlasting chime.
Who carry music in their heart
Through dusky lane and wrangling mart;
Plying their daily task with busier feet,
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat."

KEBLE.

A beautiful example of literal "praying and working" took place in lowly life not long ago. A poor washerwoman wished to do something for souls, but she could not leave her tub. Her neighbour offered to do her work, and so set her free "to do what she could;" and the offer was gratefully accepted. There was to be an evangelistic meeting that evening, and the washerwoman resolved to bestow her free afternoon in bringing in wanderers from the streets and byeways. The kind neighbour did more, however, for her friend than wash and soap, and wring and

hang up to dry. As she bent over the steaming soap-suds, her heart went up in voiceless prayer to the Hearer and the Answerer. Seventeen souls that would not otherwise have heard of the meeting did the washerwoman bring within the sound of the Gospel, and each of those seventeen souls not only heard, but accepted, and it is believed are now walking consistently in the way that leads to eternal life.

May God, the Holy Spirit, give each of us a deeper insight into sin and holiness! May He take away from us all excuses for going on in "little sins." May He keep us from being wiser than the Bible, and more spiritual than its Spirit-taught teachers. May we like them fearlessly put the right names on the right things, and apply them to the right people, (ourselves always foremost). Let us strive both in profession and practice to show the twofold nature of Free Grace—the Law and the Gospel united in that wonder-working appellation—"He shall save His people from their sins!"

III.

Up and away ; like the odours of sunset
That sweeten the twilight as darkness comes on,
So be my life—a thing felt but not noticed,
And I but remembered by what I have done.

Yes ; like the fragrance that wanders in freshness
When the flowers that it came from are closed up and gone,
So would I be to this world's weary dwellers,
Only remembered by what I have done.

Needs there the praise of the love-written record—
The name and the epitaph graved on the stone ?
The things we have lived for let them be our story,
We ourselves but remembered by what we have done.

I need not be missed ; if my life has been bearing
(As its summer and autumn moved silently on)
The bloom, and the fruit, and the seed of its season,
I shall still be remembered by what I have done.

Not myself, but the truth that in life I have spoken—
Not myself, but the seed that in life I have sown,
Shall pass on to ages—all about me forgotten,
Save the truth I have spoken, the things I have done.

H. BONAR.

III.

INFLUENCE.

“They helped every one his neighbour.”—Isaiah xli. 6.

IN the last chapter some of the practical home-results of Conversion were briefly noticed. There is another equally important and often forgotten effect which I desire to bring before you at this time. If the story of peace has been to you a reality, and your souls ARE at peace, and if, instead of being swayed like the wind by the influences around, you have put yourself under the influences of the Holy Spirit, you must be careful how the power within you—the power of influencing others—finds a channel into society. Do you doubt whether you possess such a power? Do you think it presumptuous to consider yourself influential? Recall the many times in which you have helped others, and have been helped yourself, to do evil, both directly and indirectly. Look around you. Is there not a voice in nature that tells you of the “power of littles?” The giant oak springs not from a huge cone, but from a tiny acorn. The meadow and the hill-farm owe not their verdure and value to a few large strong tufts of grass, but to millions of

small green blades. All and every thing has its appointed place; all working a work—all exerting an influence. So also do you. Hitherto it has been an influence for Satan, and it must now be an influence for God. You must now help your brother to obey the Lord, and you must say to your neighbour when he seeks for peace and cannot find it, “be of good courage: this is the way, walk ye in it.”

This influence, if it is of the right kind, will have several characteristics. *It will be a brave influence.* You will not shrink from confessing before men that a change has come upon your inmost soul. On the contrary, you will endeavour to show to all men that, though your light may be but a rush-light, yet that it burns for the glory of God. Influence may be noiseless as the dew falling upon the tender herb, yet it requires to have within it the essence of bravery, aye, the very essence of martyrdom, so that, if it need be, ye could meet the pistol and the bludgeon, or, more difficult still, the scoff and the insult, rather than turn from helping others to do good, as ye have hitherto encouraged them to do evil. In the day when the Lord maketh up His jewels, it will be a blessed thing to bring to Him the gems which His grace has enabled you to assist in collecting and polishing amid the perils of the mine and the heat of the scorching furnace. It is a wonderful thought that poor and needy, helpless and defenceless in ourselves, we may yet so wield our influence, small and

apparently edgeless as the weapon may be, that we may "come to the help of the Lord against the mighty!" (Judges v. 23.)

It will be a personal influence. You will not be content with telling your neighbours that it is a joyful thing to serve the Lord, but, by your happy spirit and beaming smile, you will show them that it is well with your own soul. You will not think it sufficient to find fault with your brother for his want of faith, but when the fields yield no meat, and the flock is cut off from your fold, then you will bear witness, by your submissive trustfulness, that the God of your salvation is your help and your hope. When you speak to others about the blood of Jesus, and the necessity of being holy, you will let them see that, though often perhaps vanquished, you are carrying on an honest struggle against your besetting sins, laying aside every weight, and hating every evil word and work.

It will be a loving influence. You will try to bring all the sympathy of a loving heart and all the kindness of gentle speech to bear upon those around; bearing and forbearing—loving and trusting—soothing and comforting—so that it may be known to all around that you no longer belong to yourself, but to the God of love. There is no influence which is so like the precious ointment that bewrayeth itself as the influence of love. There is no influence which is so like the influence of God.

It will be a quiet influence. Like the light, it will shine noiselessly on all around, yet with a power genial and irresistible.

“The light is ever silent !
It calls up voices over sea and earth,
And fills the glowing air with harmonies.
It sparkles on morn’s million gems of dew,
It flings itself into the shower of noon,
It wakes the voice of childhood soft and clear,
The city’s living rush, the village stir.
But still it sounds not, speaks not, whispers not ;
Not one faint throb of its vast pulse is heard
By creature ear. How silent is the light !
Such let my life be here :
Not marked by noise, but by success alone,
Not known by bustle, but by useful deeds.
Quiet and gentle, clear and fair as light,
Yet full of its all-penetrating power,
Its silent, yet resistless, influence.
Making no needless stir, yet ever working,
Hour after hour, upon a needy world.” H. BONAR.

It is related that the watchman of the Calais Light-house was boasting on one occasion of the brilliancy of his lanterns, and some one said to him, “What if your lights were to go out ?” “Go out !” he said, with a surprised air ; “impossible ! No, never. Yonder at sea, where nothing is seen by our eyes,” he went on to say, “there are ships traversing the deep, going to every part of the world, and if to-night one of my lamps went out, within twelve months we should have a letter, perhaps from the other side of the globe, telling us that on such a night the Calais

light burned dimly, that the watchman neglected his post, and that ships were in danger. Go out! no, never. I think, as I look out on the dark, gloomy night towards the sea, that the eyes of the whole world are fixed on my light. Go out! impossible!"

Ah, Christians, your influence must be like the light shining from the lonely lighthouse rock; you "cannot be hid;" you must not "go out." "Let your light so shine before men." I always think that two old women of whom you may have heard must have exercised a very quiet, light-like influence upon their neighbours. One was the old woman who, when questioned by her minister, had no words to say for Jesus, and, being dismissed as hopelessly ignorant, turned back at the door, saying, with streaming eyes, "I canna speak for my Lord; but I could *dee* for Him!" The other was old Betty, a well-known example of happy patience. When asked how she could bear the long confinement to a bed of pain and illness, she said, cheerily, "When I was well, I used to hear my Lord saying to me, 'Betty do this, and Betty do that, and Betty go there,' but now I hear His loving voice saying, 'Betty, lie still, and cough!'"

It will be an influence with a voice. John the Baptist called himself a voice, "the voice," and, as it has been well remarked, every thing about him was instinct with "voice"—his food, his clothing, his

dwelling, as well as his words. "The Bible is written in an unknown tongue to the world, and the lives of Christians should be its translation." Everybody who has looked into a book written in a foreign language knows how welcome a faithful translation of that book is. Everybody who has been in foreign lands, without having the gift of tongues, knows how valuable the voice is which explains the meaning of what is said. So Christians should be voices, to explain to the world what God is saying and has long said in His Gospel of peace and grace and holiness.

It will be a spreading influence. Like the stone flung into the water, it will produce circle after circle of sparkling life-like ripples. David Sandeman, the missionary to the Chinese, was a good example of this feature of sanctified influence. Before he went out to foreign lands he lived as clerk in a Manchester warehouse. The stone that he first threw into the water was nothing more than spending part of the dinner-hour and other fragments of time in reading the New Testament and prayer—strange enough sight that in a warehouse—but stranger circles followed. A word to one clerk and a word to another, till at last three came to read and pray with him. "It did seem a strange sight," he writes; "three of us examining God's Word in such a place, in the midst of cloth, and noise, and bustle!" Still the circles spread. Several then came, one of them a Roman Catholic,

to repeat verses of Scripture to the young bright-faced clerk. Still wider grew the circles, and he writes, "I find new opportunities every day at the warehouse for speaking a word for Jesus." And all the time his three mottoes were (combining the secret of his influence): "Looking to Jesus. My grace is sufficient for Thee. Whose I am, and whom I serve."

It will be a transforming influence. It will lead others to go, to be, and to do likewise. There was a certain nobleman so excellent in his life and conduct, according to the world's maxims, that Edmund Burke, the great orator, wrote of him, "Remember, resemble, persevere." Much more should the nobles of the court of Christ—whose influence ought to come from the inner Presence Chamber—be objects of remembrance and imitation. Those who strive to copy Christ are worthy of being copied themselves. "Oh Lord, cast me into the mould of thy word" was the prayer of Mr. Hewitson, the lowly minister by the Scotch seashore, who left foot-prints there that have been followed, and a mould of holy character which has been impressed on the age which was honoured by his bright example. "Those things which ye have both learned and received, and heard, and seen in me, DO, and the God of peace shall be with you."

It is an influence which will not despise the day of small things. When you plant a seed in your neighbour's garden—when you mend the broken pane—

when you piece a torn garment—or cultivate a fragrant rose—or teach the little child a single text of the Holy Word, it is not too small an office to be done as work for God. If He give His blessing, there may come a great impetus from the little tract—there may spring from the tiny seed an abundant harvest of help and encouragement to your brother, your neighbour, and yourself. It is by such influences, here a little and there a little, that many a desert place and thirsty wilderness will be turned into the fruitful field and well-watered garden.

But this influence will also strive after great things. The beautiful proportion in the Bible precepts for the guidance of a Bible life is often left unnoticed. We are to show silently the grace which is in us, and we are also to speak with the lips. We are to do the least things for Jesus and thus to have them all turned to good, but we are not to stop even at small things rightly done. We are to do things that are in themselves great in the strength of the Lord. “Yea, greater things than these shall ye do,” said He of his own works to His disciples. To be strong in the power of the Spirit—to be filled with a burning love for souls, with an earnest realisation of what they are to be plucked from—to be fellow-workers with the Lord in the great, real, steady work of conversion; these great things lie before each servant of the Lord. None will be so blessed in these greater works as those who have done the

lesser first and well "in the Spirit." None will have so much influence over souls as those who have sought every day to sanctify their common influence upon surrounding hearts, tempers, amusements, and employments. "Do in hill as you would do in hall" is a good old secular proverb ; but to do in earthly matters as you would do in spiritual, to be as earnest, true, and faithful in the one as the other, is a lesson scarcely yet learned by the majority of Christians. "I will tell you what has been very strongly impressed on my soul during the last few months—that it is not so much *working* for God or *speaking* for God, as *living* in the *secret of His presence*, which most glorifies Him. If we do live before Him, and with Him, we *shall* work and *shall* speak ; and *then* half the effort and half the words will bring forth a thousand-fold larger harvest of results, because all will come with the Spirit's power and unction and presence. Thus we shall glorify Him, and shall become a power in His hands among men, and a testimony, yea, even when silent, to all with whom we associate. Here is the secret of a holy life and of a useful one !"

I have often noticed that working women and cottage mothers, and household servants, even though truly converted, seem to think themselves exempted from special Christian work, and that thereby they suffer great loss to their own souls. To work for the Lord is not only of consequence to the souls of

others, but it is of great value to our own. The woman who does nothing for the souls of her neighbours, is on the high road to such a cold careless state as must naturally end in doing no sort of work "unto the Lord;" neither home work nor house work will thrive with her. When the traveller was sinking benumbed and lethargic amongst the fatal snows of the mountains, he revived at once into life and warmth when he began to rub his perishing companion. Look up, then, from your chilly, frozen heart, and see whom you can rub till you get all a-glow with love to the Saviour of perishing souls. You have "little time," true; "no cleverness," true; "no words," true; "you are inconsistent," true; but look to Jesus. He supplies everything. Give a tract—lend some of your good books—tell the children next door a Bible story—tell what a Saviour Jesus is, to the beggar at the door, when you give him a slice of bread—repeat comforting texts to the sick neighbour, whose fire you light and whose bed you arrange. Be always on the watch for an opportunity—ask for opportunities—ask for the Spirit to bless every little effort you make; and depend upon it the snow will melt, and the numbness will fade away, and the inconsistencies will get less: by trying to water others you will find you are watered also yourself. In a distant, unconsecrated part of a churchyard in the South of France, a working woman has as noble a monument as woman ever had. A French Roman Catholic was converted

to the truth as it is in Jesus, and with a Bible in her pocket, went back to her cottage, in a little lonely village among the mountains, where at that time an English voice had probably never been heard, and where no missionary foot had trod. The poor woman was alone, and yet not alone; so she took courage, and said a word here, and a word there, out of her precious Bible, and through these words was the means of converting a farmer; through him the truth spread, and a gradually increasing little company met on Sabbath and week days to read and pray together, till at last the work grew and excited attention both ways. Godly Protestant ministers went and ministered as they had opportunity to that little "Church in the vallies," while much opposition and persecution awaited its members. The feeble, aged woman died, who years before had set the stone a rolling, and so thoroughly was she recognised by the persecuting neighbours as the origin of this work, that as a punishment they buried her in a place set aside for suicides, malefactors, and unbaptised babies! Not content with this—in order to show how much worse they considered her than her neighbours in death—they built a wall around her honoured grave, for fear of contaminating the bones of the suicides, malefactors, and poor little infants!

There is a charming book, called the "Life of Sarah Martin," which shows what a woman can do. I will give you an abstract of it:—There is a very lowly

grave away in the south of England, near the sea. Many graves contain stately coffins of oak and velvet, and are marked by monumental brasses, or marble obelisks, but this is only celebrated for being precious in the sight of the Lord. In the day when the graves shall be opened, and the dead shall arise, how joyfully that honoured sleeper, Sarah Martin, the dressmaker, will spring to greet her Lord! Many a tear fell, and many a heart was sore when she died; but soon she shall live again. She was diligent, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. It was the sole study of her life to please her heavenly King. And, first, she was diligent in her calling. She was a dressmaker at Yarmouth: not one praised by the titled and the beautiful; not one whose work enfolded graceful forms; nor one of the interesting and oppressed dressmakers commemorated in songs and novels. No; she was only an industrious well-doing seamstress in a provincial town. But she had a higher calling, in which she diligently laboured; she ministered unto the hungry and the thirsty, the naked, the sick, and the prisoner. She did more than feed the body, and visit fettered limbs. She led many hungry, destitute, captive souls to the cross of Christ, and God gave her saved sinners, both young and old, as her hope and crown of rejoicing. It was a life of self-crucifixion; taking up the cross daily, and following Jesus—pleasing Him, and not pleasing men; for she had no *renown*, and little praise, yet she could say, “My own

path was bright from first to last, in the knowledge of God, and the smile of His favour." Every Sabbath-day she went to the prison, and four or five days in the week beside—reading, praying, exhorting, and teaching. For three and twenty years she endured an amount of fatigue, which her delicate frame was little fitted to bear: keeping accounts, cutting out clothes for the unclothed, writing, preparing the prisoners' copy books, keeping a watchful eye upon the liberated as well as those still in prison, and labouring with her needle for her own support, and the means of administering to others. At last the frail tabernacle began to dissolve, and pain came in violent agonies; in a few moments of ease she thus writes:—"I am so slow a scholar in the school of love and mercy, that my dear Redeemer cannot allow me to go home yet, but he will soon 'perfect that which concerneth me.'"

The beautiful description of the Christian—"not one who looks up from earth to heaven, but one who looks down from heaven on earth," became increasingly descriptive of her state. She shrank more and more from the society of those who did not love Jesus; and wherever she went her proposal was—"Let us read God's word together." The furnace of bodily pain was heated seven-fold, yet was she calm and joyful; and when told that death was just approaching, she said, "Thank God! Thank God!" How sweet and tender will be the voice which she is yet to

hear, "Come, thou blessed of my Father!" Oh! ye many women that live "at ease in Zion," why are there not more "Yarmouth Dressmakers?" Why are there not more good and faithful servants? Why are we not all known by that most honourable appellation given by a poor heathen: "Women of the Book?" Arise, then, from false humility, from presumptuous slothfulness—"for all may have, if we dare chuse, a glorious life and grave."

Have we done what we could? Think of our store!

Hath love of Christ constrained to make it less?

What worthless trifles placed his will before:

Our house, our food, our furniture, our dress!

How much for carnal mirth, how much for pride,

How little done for God, how seldom self-denied.

Have we done what we could? Think of our time!

This busy, scheming world in every thought;

The days misspent, or haply spent in crime,

Pleasure or profit, ease or greatness sought?

With zeal that never tires, while God alone

Always hath had but little, very often none.

Have we done what we could? Think of our prayers!

When God was served, what service have we given?

Conscience will tell us how the vain world shared

The few short hours we seem to spend with Heaven.

Oh how His wrath must burn the while we kneel

And speak of wants unknown, of sins we never feel.

Have we done what we could? Think of our heart!

Our secret inmost self, our mind, our soul,

Our strength, our all. Have we return'd a part?

If but a part—to Him who claims the whole?

Rather, His claims are utterly withstood

By lust of other things, by love of creature good!

Have we done what we could ? Ere we reply
Our store, time, prayers, and hearts survey—
Lest our lips venture, what our lives deny :
Pause ere we answer ; pause, and meekly pray
That God may teach us answer fit to make,
And for all time to come our former way forsake.
From " Morning Thoughts."

IV.

The voice that breathed o'er Eden
That earliest wedding day,
The primal marriage blessing,
It hath not passed away.

Still in the pure espousal
Of Christian man and maid,
The Holy Three are with us :
The threefold grace is said.

Oh, spread Thy pure wing o'er them,
Let no ill powers find place,
When onward to Thy mansion
Their daily path they trace.

From HYMNS ANCIENT AND MODERN.

IV.

WIVES.

“Likewise, ye wives be in subjection to your own husbands ; that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives.”—I Peter iii. 1.

“She will do her husband good and not evil all the days of her life.—Prov. xxxi. 12.

I LATELY read a little story founded upon the English proverb, “A man is what a woman makes him.” This is a very strong assertion, and one which both men and women must shrink from admitting to be wholly true ; but, like all popular proverbs, it contains some truth, and may be thus modified : “A man’s home is what a woman makes it.” And all must admit how much a man’s manner of life depends upon his two homes—the home of his mother, and the home of his wife. It is upon the last of these that I wish to speak at present. I am the more urged to do so by the many sad city homes of which I have heard lately. I have heard of many husbands and wives, whose homes are so wretched, that they separate, and live in different parts of the same town. I have heard of others who drag on a miserable existence together,

hateful, and hating one another—but the chief blame resting on the wife: for, as it was remarked, “it cannot be very pleasant for a husband to hear his wife constantly saying that she wished she could get rid of him!” I have heard of husbands, earning from eighteen to twenty-two shillings a week, whose wives are never at the trouble of cooking any food for them, buying ready-made broth and cheese. I have heard of wives, who, when their husbands have finished their wretched dinners, and are off to their work, sit down to their own comfortable tea, garnished with expensive buns, white bread, and fresh butter. These precise forms of home discomfort may not be the same in the country as in the town, but even there wives are not so frequently “the right women in the right place,” as to render a word of warning unsuitable, or unnecessary. And what is a wife’s “right place,” it may be asked? I answer in the words of the Bible—doing her husband good, and not evil, **ALL THE DAYS** of her life. I spoke to you of **INFLUENCE** in the last chapter, and of the “power of littles.” Perhaps this may be read by some toiling overworked wives with large families, each new baby bringing with it untended pain and delicacy of health,—their youth and their comeliness long gone by—their energies and their nerves unstrung—their tempers soured, and their eyes grown accustomed to the confusion and disorder around them. Or, another class of wives may read, *and shed tears* at the very thought of a “happy

home"—those who have idle, drunken, unkind husbands—miserably reduced wages brought to them—and nothing in their place but hard blows, and harder words. "What can we do? What influence can we have?" is the universal answer of all such wives, whether of the one class or the other. It is true it is easier "to preach than to practise;" it is true that none but the One who sympathises with EVERY human sorrow can fully know the trials and difficulties in the way of working men's wives. But still it is the very feeling of helplessness that creates the worst part of the difficulty. Each feels as if it must be some great thing she must do, so she thinks she can do nothing. Will you try the "POWER OF LITTLES?" Not one of us will be able to tell the full power of little things, for evil and for good, till all flesh stands in the presence of the Lord. Here are a few suggestions of "littles," which might have a great and wonderful "power" in creating a happy home. You know where the strength that can make them powerful must come from. Not one will be of much use unless you ask the Lord Jesus to bless them—unless you feel that you are doing them for Him, and in His name.

1.—Gentle words. God says, that "a soft answer turneth away wrath." It is a little thing, but how strong it must be! TRY it the next time you have to answer an angry husband.

2.—No words at all. How many home storms

arise from the wife's needless reproaches, or misplaced remonstrances, or irritating questions! When she feels "put out"—everything going wrong with her—oh! if she would but be like her Saviour, and "open not her mouth," save in prayer to Him, till the harassing feelings have passed away, how much evil might be prevented!

3.—A humble spirit. It is wonderful how much women dislike to be thought wrong in trifles! Many who can control their tempers and bear to be contradicted in greater things do not think very small things worth bearing well. "Did you see the mousie* run in at yon hole?" said a husband one day to his wife. "Yes," said the wife, "I saw the mousie; but it went in at t'other hole." "No, it did not," said the husband. "Yes, it did," retorted the wife. I do not know, and should be sorry to repeat if I did, all the sad things that were said on both sides; the wife was determined to prove herself in the right, and the husband would not give in to his wife. The sad result was that the pair whom God had joined together put themselves asunder, and did not meet again for some years. At last they were reconciled and again met in the old home. All went well till one evening the wife's eye was caught by the mouse holes, and she said pertly, "But the mousie DID go in at that hole!" The whole miserable dispute came on

* These diminutives are in very general use in Aberdeenshire. *This anecdote is a fact.*

again, and they separated—I believe never more to meet. This may be an extreme case, but many a home quarrel arises from the wife not liking to give in and to be thought wrong, or poor-spirited, even in things of no moment whatever.

4.—Pleasant smiles. “When the heart is aching and breaking, how can I smile?” says many an oppressed wife. TRY, again must be my advice. Ask God to put the smiling power in your heart. A pleasant look, a smoothed brow, a gentle smile, will somehow be easier the second time than the first, and I am quite sure that all who have made the experiment, and not tired of it, will find that kind smiles have the magic power of waking up other people’s smiles. Perhaps, when you have made your husband smile by a cheerful kindly word, he will look more like the old lover of your youth than he does at present, and you will be more likely to recall to his memory the days of “long ago.”

5.—A tidy hearth. A weary man coming in from his work is much more sensitive than a woman thinks to the aspect of his home. A black fire—hearth full of ashes—chairs covered with dish-clouts, or cups and saucers—wet clothes flapping and steaming overhead, irritate and worry him, though he may not even know why, and send him oftener to the comfortable, but fatal public-house than any other cause. Sweep your hearth, and tidy up your house before you wonder at your husband’s neglect.

6.—Carefully cooked food. You may know very little about cooking. You may have very little to cook. I am quite sure of two things, however, that every woman by attention and carefulness can learn to cook the working man's dinner and supper in a neat and wholesome manner; and that the more she does so, the more material she will have, in consequence of the less temptation for her husband to throw away his money on the dram, the pipe, and the jovial supper.

7.—Soap and water. Water is plentiful, but soap is dear, it will be urged. Are there not wasted on "sweeties," or needless indulgences, pennies in many households that would buy sufficient soap to brighten dirty windows—make old furniture look new—and black floors a beautiful yellow—not to speak of clean persons, children's glossy heads, renovated print dresses, snowy aprons, caps, and table-cloths, which would make many a husband say with pride and satisfaction, "What a clean home, and tidy wife I have! I'll go no more with Dick and Tom to the public-house over yonder."

8.—Fresh air. This may seem a little thing, but windows that never open—dunghills close to the door—boxed-in beds, and bedclothes never thrown open to the cleansing atmosphere, cause wailing, fretful children, languid wives, irritable tempers, and craving for stimulants in working men; and thus produce more discomfort than any one might find *easy to believe*. Throw open your windows—re-

move everything that is offensive from your doors—air your beds every morning before you make them, and you will soon find the difference in health and comfort for yourself and your husband.

Want of space forbids the mention of more of ~~those~~ “littles” which a woman sincerely desirous of using her influence will not think too small to be full of power. Remember two things: 1. Not only do each of you possess influence, but you cannot get rid of it. If you are not using it for good in your homes, you are using it for fearful evil. 2. There is only one way of dealing with this fearfully important gift which God has given to every woman under the sun—go and “tell Jesus” about it—lay it at His feet—ask Him to teach you what to do with it, and He will enable you to do your husband and your children good, and not evil, all the days of your and their lives.

“She always made home happy” was written on the tombstone of a wife. Blessed epitaph! but not the most blessed. Yes, a higher thing remains for the Christian wife. One home in this life, however happy it might appear to be, and a divided home in eternity! Ah, that is not the object of ambition held out in the Bible. The husbands are to be won for Christ and Heaven by the wives, so that they may be able to say—

“Yea, through thy grace to us is given,
One heart on earth, one home in heaven.”

How are they to be won? Not by preaching to them, not by scolding them; no, but “without the

word." The subjection, the meekness, the daily conversation of the wives (just the different manifestations of home life which we have been speaking of) are to testify of the work of Jesus, who is the Word of Life, and thus the husbands are to be won for eternity! As the commands of Scripture are clear, "Marry . . . only in the Lord—be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," this encouraging promise seems to apply chiefly to those women who have become Christians after their marriage. Ah, that young women who care about their own souls would resolve not to disobey God's word in this momentous matter! Let them not—as disobedient—expect the blessings which He promises to those who are linked in a dissimilar union, only because they themselves have since been reached by the grace of God. A young Christian woman married a man whom she knew "cared for none of these things." "But I will convert him," was the presumptuous language of her heart. Day by day she toiled—day by day she prayed—day by day she preached; but scorn and inattention was all her meed. One day he turned upon her. "Give me your Bible." Wondering and hopeful, she complied. He sternly turned the pages till he came to 1 Cor. vii. 39, and read—"Only in the Lord!" "Did you know those words before you married me?" A pause. "Yes," she faltered out. "Then never speak more to me about the religion which you have disobeyed."

V.

"ANOTHER little wave
Upon the sea of life ;
Another SOUL to SAVE
Amid its toil and strife.

Two more little feet
To walk the dusty road ;
To CHOOSE where TWO PATHS meet—
The NARROW, and the BROAD.

Two more little hands
To work for good or ill ;
Two more little eyes ;
Another little will.

Another heart to love,
Receiving love again ;
And so the BABY came,
A thing of joy and pain."

ANON.

V.

MOTHERS OF MEN.

"I have gotten a man from the Lord."—Gen. iv. 1.

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."—Prov. xxii. 6.

"A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame."—Prov. xxix. 15.

So enormous are the evils which exist in our land—now more than formerly brought to light—that the soul sickens, and the hand of the worker falls paralysed. Our large towns are sinks of festering and infectious corruption, fed by sewers from country districts. Coarse habits, over-crowded houses, foul air, uncleanness, drunkenness, and prostitution not only act and re-act upon each other, thus fulfilling the present purposes of Satan, but are pitfalls to bring into his clutches children and the children's children of generations yet unborn. An old adage says, "Prevention is better than cure." The glorious revival work of the Gospel throughout many lands has lifted out of the mire many of the most degraded, and made them rejoice in the free salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Saved themselves, however, they have yet slain their thousands and tens of thousands of perished souls. Let us not wait, therefore, for

Conversion to carry on the work of Prevention—let us not be satisfied with any professed Revival that has not had as its fruit the attack, if not the defeat, of Satan in ALL his strongholds. Let us never cease pressing the Gospel on the one hand, and the practical preventing effects of the Gospel on the other, from the saving of a soul to the cleansing of a house. But when that Gospel is rejected, not even then must we cease our efforts at external reformation. The respectable, outwardly cleansed, but impenitent sinner will indeed perish as surely as the vilest of the vile, but he drags not with him the corrupted bodies and the infected souls of his victim-neighbours. Let teetotalism—houses that render decency practicable—healthy and moral amusements—practical education be freely resorted to; and, as it has been well said, “If you cannot keep a man out of hell, it is a blessing to his children, his neighbours, and his country if you keep him out of prison.”

It is with the young, however, that the work of Prevention must ever be most successful. Much is written and much is done to help and reform women in these days; but until a generation of better *men* arise, no real Prevention can be brought about. To whom can we turn for this but to the MOTHERS who have received a man-child from the Lord? There are various weighty proverbs which testify to the influence of mothers over their sons in all times and in all nations. It is the mother that moulds the man;

She that rocks the cradle rules the world ; A child drinketh in education with his mother's milk ; an influence equally possessed, and alas ! exerted by the worst and the most degraded. But to whom can we look for the right exercise of this mighty mother-gift, of this first and best act of Prevention, save to those who profess to belong to the Lord ? It is a subject of general and, I fear, of true remark, however, that the children of highly professing parents *do* very generally "depart" from the right way—while, on the other hand, the word of the Lord stands sure, "Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old he will *not* depart from it." There must be some reason for this discrepancy. You will observe that it is not said, "Speak to your child about the way," or "Pray for your child in the way"—but "*Train up* your child in the way." You may pray, and speak about Jesus, and yet not train at all—but you cannot train up a child in the way that he should go without teaching him about Jesus, and without earnest and abundant prayer for him. Speaking and praying alone are comparatively easy, and training very difficult ; so it comes that many Christian mothers content themselves with that which is easy, and forget to train, and then wonder at the awful consequences.

TRAINING implies constant thought, constant watching, constant love, constant watering, constant removal of the dead withered leaves.

TRAINING neglects no part of the way—the training mother will not say, “Ah! he is too young to obey, to learn self-control—self-denial now—by-and-bye will be time enough for that.” No! She saves many a hard wrench afterwards, by beginning when the little branches are at the tenderest, and easiest to twine.

TRAINING is not for Heaven only—the way is to be walked in, for it may be threescore years and ten, in company with hundreds whom the child is to influence, and be influenced by. He must be taught to be a good neighbour, a skilful workman, a faithful husband, a loyal subject. Christian mothers must remember that there are many things which conversion does not give at all, though it often gives the wish and vain striving after, whereby much valuable time is lost. It does not give habits of order and cleanliness—it does not teach household management, right regulation of means, practical usefulness of the hands. Conversion *will* control the temper, and teach abstinence from intemperate habits, but even there, oh, how long, how painful the struggle! What need, then, for mothers to *train* their children in those things which will be lacking in them all their life, even after conversion, if not taught betimes! What need for mothers to be implanting by God’s grace habits of self-control and sobriety, and thus lessen the awful struggles against early physical habits, which are so sad to witness in the truly con-

verted! I heard an awful example lately of the "ruling passion" unchecked in childhood, showing itself "strong in death." A gentleman went to visit a young boy of fourteen on his death-bed in an hospital. He had been a thief. His eyes were glazing in death as the kind visitor bent over him, speaking solemn words. The nurse exclaimed, "He has taken your breast-pin!" In ten minutes all was over, and the pin was found in the dead boy's mouth. The temptation even in that moment had been irresistible. "Learn young, learn fair," has an edge that cuts both ways, and may well be both a comfort and a warning to the training mother. Mrs. Bayley, in one of her admirable works, gives us these remarks:—"About two years ago, a poor woman, with an infant on her back, entered a whiskey-retailer's shop, and demanded a 'gill.' She was in the act of putting it to her mouth, when the nursling, stretching out its little hand, set up a scream that it might also partake of the draught! The mother quaffed her portion, and then asked for another glass, which she handed over her shoulder to the little thing, who drank it out with as great a relish, evidently, as its mother. A bystander expressed his astonishment at both tempter and tempted, when the woman, with an oath, exclaimed, 'Learn young, learn fair.' What think you of the lesson, mothers? What think you of the teacher? And if that child grow up a drunkard (as most likely it will) who made it so? Its mother!

In looking over the face of society, and tracing back the connection between cause and effect, we fear there are more drunkards who have to blame their parents for having made them so than at first sight appears; and these fathers and mothers occupying a far more privileged position than did this poor woman. In how many families is it the practice, when intoxicating drinks are being drunk, that the parents offer, nay *lure*, their little ones to partake along with them. We have sometimes heard a father commending his boy for his *manliness* (sad abuse of the term) in draining out a glass! Fathers—mothers! *you* know good from evil, and can stop in time, or progress to ruin if you will; but your child, are you not sinning against it? Oh, do not make it a drinker, ere it know *all* that fearful word ‘drunkard’ implies. If you will not banish drink from your homes, at least do not *train* your families to like it. They will soon enough meet with the temptation in the world, without having either the *power* or the *will* to resist it, if you have habitually accustomed them to it at home.”

TRAINING is not for the earth only; the way reaches on to the great city which hath enduring foundations, or to the lake, the fires whereof are never to be quenched. The training mother’s first care, therefore, is to have her children’s souls saved—and saved abundantly, not as by fire, after they have ruined the souls of many others. Her second care is so to connect the training for both worlds that the

child may learn by the Holy Spirit's teaching that it cannot be idle, or selfish, or greedy, or unkind, or untrue without dishonouring and grieving the Saviour of little children, even as when he is old he cannot be a careless servant, an ignorant workman, a negligent head of a household, an inconsistent Christian, a bad steward of a "few things" without silencing the gracious heart that longs to say unto him, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Training implies a consistent attention to the child's education as a whole. God's word says, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all; for he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law." A well-known instance of Scotch morality will illustrate this point. A drunken man, staggering along the street on Sunday, was heard to rebuke another for "whustling on the Sabbath-day." This is often brought forward as an instance of hypocrisy, or of the evils of strict Sabbatarianism. It is neither the one nor the other. It is a sad and touching tribute to the broken memories of what *had* been learned at a mother's knee, which came back in the midst of unconscious degradation; and it shows that that mother had not been consistent in her teaching. She had pressed strongly the sacredness of the Sabbath, but, in all probability, she did not herself see the evils of a "taste" of whiskey.

TRAINING implies that the child sees that the trainer trains herself. You may teach him about the gentleness of Jesus, but if you fly into a passion, the child will not care to be more like Jesus than his mother is. Many a Christian mother might take a lesson from the secret of Mr. Rarey, the horse tamer. Many a turbulent spirit that hardens itself in a storm of words yields to the taming whisper of consistent gentleness. You may teach him that he is to be merciful, even as Jesus is merciful; but if he sees that you turn away a beggar from your door harshly, or refuse a kind office to a neighbour, the training by words is of worse than no effect. One cannot imagine that the mother of whom we have this beautiful story had ever herself been heard by her son to palter with the truth:—

“It is related of a Persian mother, that on giving her son forty pieces of silver as his portion, she made him swear never to tell a lie, and said, ‘Go my son; I consign thee to God, and we shall not meet again till the day of judgment.’ The youth went away, and the party he travelled with were assaulted by robbers. One fellow asked the boy what he had, and he answered, ‘Forty dinars are sewed up in my clothes.’ The robber laughed, thinking that the boy jested; another asked the same question, and received the same answer. At last the chief called him, and asked him what he had? The boy replied, ‘I have told

two of your people already, that I have forty dinars sewed up in my clothes.' The chief ordered the clothes to be ripped open, and the money was found. 'And how came you to tell this?' 'Because, replied the boy, 'I would not be false to my mother, to whom I promised never to tell a lie.' 'Child,' said the robber, 'art thou so mindful of thy duty to thy mother at thy years, and I am insensible at my age, of the duty I owe to *God*? Give me thy hand that I may swear repentance upon it.' He did so, and his followers were struck with the act. 'You have been our leader in guilt,' they said to the chief, 'be the same in the path of virtue;' and taking the boy's hand, they took the oath of repentance on it."

Some mothers, on the other hand, place great store on their children knowing that they are Christians, and on their never seeing them do anything inconsistent. Neither is this sufficient. God's word does not say, "A child with a bad example set before it bringeth its mother to shame;" but simply, "A child *left to itself* bringeth its mother to shame." It will be small excuse to Him who gave you your sons and your daughters, that you left them to themselves, or to a servant whom you know little about, while you attend nightly prayer meetings, or talk with or to your neighbours about their souls, or study the Bible and religious books.

"Who is sufficient for these things?" may mothers well exclaim. WE are not sufficient, dear friends,

VI.

THE MOTHER OF WOMEN.

"Forbid them not."—Mat. xix. 14.

"Even a child is known by its doings."—Prov. xx. 11.

"Her end is bitter as wormwood."—Prov. v. 4.

IN the last chapter we spoke about the home where mothers train the men who are to succeed their fathers. Let us now think of the home where mothers prepare the women of another generation. Before doing so, let us go to yonder city, containing by the last census many thousand inhabitants. What awful sounds and sights are these which greet us by night? The whiskey-maddened voices and shameless faces of its many hundred fallen women. They are to be seen on the public street, tempting sons and husbands of innocent women. They are to be seen in hideous whiskey shops, hardening themselves for their Satanic trade; or in more respectable localities, and with fairer aspect, luring into their toils other girls yet young and innocent. In the voices, manner of speech, and cast of feature of many of these unhappy beings, there seems something frightfully familiar to us. Surely these miserable ones have not always been dwellers in wretched alleys, loathsome courts, foul-aired dens. Ah! country mothers, listen and

tremble. Two-thirds of these fallen, depraved women are from the fair peaceful country districts. A large proportion have been servants in farm-houses, or maids-of-all-work in small country establishments, or "girls" in large ones. Some are the daughters of crofters, some of village mechanics, some of farm servants, others of farmers themselves. Bold and coarse in their conduct, they had first, in the popular and sinful language of the country, a "misfortune." Since then they went from bad to worse; and as the last step took refuge where the Bible tells us, "The guests are in the depths of hell." Country mothers, again I say, listen and tremble. Think not that your respectability—your good sense—nay, your godliness prevents you from having an awful personal interest in this painful subject. I know of a respectable, prudent, Christian widow, whose arms have often forcibly restrained her young daughter from her wicked courses. But, alas! the mother's arms have grown too weak, and the daughter's vices too strong. The tears the widow sheds over one blind, suffering, and helpless child in an asylum are as balm compared to the burning ones with which she mourns over the lost street-walker.

Effects must have causes; endings must have beginnings; "the child is father to the man;" training gives the turn to the pliant twig; home gives its colour to the future life. By what great deeds, then, are we to keep country children from becoming

town pests? Again we shall perhaps see that the aggregated force required is to be still "the power of littles;" or, what in other words, seem little things in time, but great things in eternity.

1st. To teach your daughter to obey promptly when you tell her to shut the door, or stop her play, is a little thing; but so is the acorn which is to grow into a huge oak. The wild, disobedient, ungoverned girl is far more likely to throw off external restraints than those accustomed to obey and honour a mother.

2nd. To choose your daughter's companions and playmates is not an easy thing; but are you sure that you do even as much as you can in the matter? Do you encourage modest, well-behaved girls to come to the house; and do you let it be distinctly understood that if disobedient, rude, wild companions are chosen, it is against your will, and under the penalty of causing heart sorrow, as well as serious displeasure? Still more needful when your girls come on a little further, do you do all that lies in your power to prevent them from becoming acquainted with young men of bad character, however good their prospects may be?

3rd. Do you set your face "like a flint" against the dancing school? If not, you have brought pitch close to your daughters—how can you wonder that they are defiled? These promiscuous evening gatherings of young girls and boys, with a sprinkling of "navvies" and wild grown-up young men—in almost every


instance without the presence of parents or elder relatives—aided by coarse jests, romping demeanour, and late dark walks homewards, are in many cases productive at an early age of ruin and misery; and in many more do such scenes give the first bent to frivolous tastes and sinful habits. Mothers and daughters, beware of the dancing school ere it be “too late.”

4th. Why should not your daughters be as gentle, as modest, as reserved with young men, as the daughters of any lady in the land? Yet that it is not so, and that the reverse habits and manners commence at a very early age, no one can fail to notice who watches boys and girls in the street or play-green, whether of town or village. An intelligent schoolmistress told me that the bold, familiar, indelicate manners towards each other of the country girls and boys attending her school made her heart-sick, when she remembered the dreadful future consequences. Small houses and packed rooms present formidable difficulties; but, mothers, from the very beginning, do all in your power to cultivate a spirit of purity, even in your young children, and you will find that modest manners and habits will, by the blessing of God's grace and Holy Spirit, grow with their growth and strengthen with their strength. The Bible speaks of three bad habits, as if closely connected in themselves—“filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting.” Let all such be abolished in your households. A

light jest, or a foolish word upon subjects which ought to be left in silence and reserve, will do more to make your daughters coarse in their thoughts and manners than you wot of; nay, will do much to help on the breaking of the seventh commandment.

5th. How do you accustom your girls to think of marriage? Do they see that beautiful thing (whether in hall or cottage, and why not in one as well as in the other?) a happy, reverent union of hearts between their fathers and mothers? Do they hear you speak with shame and sorrow of all manifestations of crime interfering with that holy and solemn relationship? Do they know that in all reverence and simplicity it is your hope and prayer that they in their turn may become the happy and honoured wives of working men? Can they trace in all your instructions an earnest desire and intention that they shall be fitted for such a position, as far as early training can do it? Try to put into practice this suggestion, and you will see that good will come from it.

6th. Do you give your girls Bible teaching? "Yes, and the Catechism, too," you answer, somewhat indignantly. Ah! you may do that, and yet your children be as ignorant of the word of God as heathens. Teach them what God has to say to *them*. Teach them out of the Proverbs, out of the Psalms, out of the Epistles what they are to do TO-DAY; what conduct the Lord Jesus hates, what He loves, and smiles upon. Teach them what He thinks about



lying, stealing, uncleanness, bad words, evil company, disobedience; above all, what He says of the hearts out of which such bad things come, so that they may seek and find new hearts and new habits.

7th. When you pray with, and for your children, do you come to particulars? Do you tell God, and let them hear you tell Him, your fears, your anxieties, their particular dangers, their habits, all that you wish to lead them to, and to lead them from? Do you mention the names of each child in prayer, so that they may know that your watchfulness and anxiety is a real and an individual thing, not merely a thing of course? And all the while you try to train and restrain, to discipline and reason, to teach and pray, do you do it in the spirit of love, so that you may make them love and not fear you? So that they may come and tell you all their dangers and temptations; so that their homes may be happy, and their hearths loved and respected.

8th. Are you careful to keep down all the foolish notions of appearing and dressing above their stations, which creep so early into the minds of girls, and which often pave the way to foolishness leading into crime? None can so effectually check with kind, reasoning words the first appearances of this temptation. Judicious mistresses may try it in after days, but to small effect, when it has gone on unchecked in the years of previous cottage life. The unsuitable dress, the useless parasol, the foolish bonnet, can

easily be put a stop to by a mother's gentle authority before it is TOO LATE. The craving to look like "ladies" can best be shown to be futile and ridiculous by the cottage matron who knows, or ought to know, that to look like a respectable womanly "woman" is a "more excellent way."

9th. Are you careful to abolish in your family all the spurious delicacy which exists, at least in Scotland, hand in hand with the most glaring indelicacies? The mother, from some strange unnatural feeling of the kind, is the last, instead of the first person, to know of anything like the commencement of "a courtship." Nay, so far is this carried that she is in some places not even expected to be at the marriage! Worse than this, though doubtless an offshoot from it, is the strange shrinking of so-called delicacy from having courtships conducted in a seemly and open manner, as in other ranks of life. The couple must not see each other in company—must not meet in open day, or in the home circle; but all sorts of expedients are resorted to by engaged lovers to meet in darkness and privacy—a practice found to result in the worst evils. Mothers! put a stop to these customs, as you love the souls and safety of your daughters!

10th. Are you careful about what places your young daughters go into? If you let them go to the first that offers, without inquiry as to character, society, and opportunities for good, you cannot wonder that, even if preserved from evil under the home roof,

they go astray when they quit it. No mother should let a young girl go to a place without going to see the mistress of it, and committing the girl to her care, telling, at the same time, her faults and temptations. If she be a mistress worth having she will fully understand you, and will think the more highly of you and your daughter. If she does not, you are better without her place.

I have spoken very frankly of the dark side of female life, but what encouragements exist on the other! If you "suffer" your daughters to come to Jesus, and "forbid them not," what a crown of glory they may be to your old age! What noble Christian matrons of happy homesteads, and Christian mothers of working men and artizans, who are the nerves and sinews of England, they may become! What blessings to all around, even your little ones may be, for—

"Young lips may teach the wise, Christ said;
Weak feet sad wanderers home have led:
And small hands cheer'd the sick one's bed
With freshest flowers."

See well to it, then, that you "forbid not" the only course which will lead to such happy results. "Forbid them to go to Jesus! the very thing I want," may be your reply. Ah! but many a Christian mother "forbids" by her actions, and will not "suffer" her children to be saved, by her inconsistencies, her want of prayer and watchfulness combined.

Mothers! I have spoken to you as Christian

mothers. Many, however, may read this who are anxious only for their daughters' safety and welfare in this life; but bear with me while I say, you must come to Jesus for yourselves before you can have any well-grounded hope of plucking your children even from the furnace of this world's danger and woe. Never can you pray with strong crying and tears, that they may be kept from the sore iniquities of which we have spoken, till you have realised for yourselves the awful nature of that original and actual Sin which is at the root of the whole evil—till you have had your own souls washed in the blood of Jesus Christ, which cleanseth from all sin.



VII.

"HAPPY house! where thou art loved the dearest,
Thou truest Friend and Saviour of our race;
And where among the guests there never cometh
One who can hold such high and honoured place.
Where every willing heart goes forth to meet Thee,
Where every ear is listening for Thy word;
Where every lip with joyful blessing greets Thee,
And everyone is waiting on his Lord.

Oh, happy house! a life of service blessed,
Where all alike one gracious Master own,
And daily duty in Thy strength encountered,
Never too hard or difficult is known;
Where everyone can serve Thee meek and lowly,
Whatever their appointed portion be,
Till every common task seems great and holy,
When it is done, O Lord, as unto Thee."

ANON.



VII.

THE HOUSE.*

"What have they seen in thine house?"—Isa. xxxix. 4.

It is related of the Marquis de Lafayette that, when undergoing a rigorous imprisonment, he was subjected to the constant supervision of a sentinel. A hole was cut in the door of the small cell, and by night and by day a human eye looked through that loophole upon the prisoner within. He afterwards related the awful sensation produced by the consciousness of that eye's clear, ceaseless gaze.

"Being observed
When observation is not sympathy
Is just being tortured."†

When the poor prisoner sank to a troubled slumber—when he started from his hard couch—when he partook of his prison fare—when he raised his eyes to Heaven in supplication, still it was there—the eye of a fellow-mortal. And so severe was the nervous suffering arising from the sense of perpetual observation that the man, though brave and much enduring,

* Most of this chapter was originally published in "Good Words," and is reprinted here by the publisher's kind permission.

† Aurora Leigh.

confessed that all other troubles and persecutions seemed light in comparison. Yet

"There is an Eye
That never shuts
Beneath the wing of night;"

Yet there is a presence from which we cannot flee, even had we the pinions of the morning—an eye and a presence of spotless holiness, belonging to Him who cannot look upon iniquity, and in whose sight the clear, beautiful heavens are not clean. How placid, how unmoved are we under the ken of this piercing vision! Is it because we can welcome and bear the holy scrutiny? Or is it because we have no practical faith in its reality?

We may have a general belief in God's presence and knowledge of our actions, and yet not realise it in daily particulars. Do we really believe that the Lord Jesus Christ knows where we dwell—whether, like Simon the tanner, by the sea-side, or like Saul, in the straight street, or in the croft, or the farm, or the large house, or the small cottage? Do we really believe that He sees every stone, every corner of our abodes, and every step we take within and without; that His holy eye scans each one of our household arrangements; that His wisdom which planned the creation of worlds with so much economy and order is ready to help us in the management of our little home-worlds? If our belief in all this

were more than head-knowledge or lip-profession, what a change would be seen in our homes! What a solemn interest would be attached to our day's work in its smallest particulars? How often, humbled and ashamed in our felt weakness and ignorance and foolishness, would we be found on our knees before God! And with what stores of strength, skill, order, economy, and cheerfulness would we arise from thence! "Ye have not, because ye ask not."

Very specially ought these motives and incentives to be held up to women who are at the head of households, whether small or great. For such to know "all about the house" is an easy matter, but to get their hearts, as well as heads and hands, educated to it, is far more difficult, and quite as necessary. Let us consider some of the points which make the right performance of household duty of essential importance, especially for women "professing godliness."

First, Its abiding and vital consequences. The household is like a vessel sailing over a difficult ocean, and the housewife is like the pilot of the vessel. If she forgets to steer, or if she does not know how to steer, or if she thinks that "it does not signify" whether she steers well or ill, the vessel, which might have sailed safely and smoothly towards its destined haven, richly freighted with love, joy, comfort, and blessing, strikes upon the rocks of

destruction, and goes down into a fearful deep. Lest any think that these words are too strong, let us look at some of the deadly rocks in the way of the little barque. There is the ale-house, and the tavern, and the gin-palace, to which the comfortless home sends the husband, the father, or the brother. Farther on, belonging to the same reef of rocks, there rear the hulks and the gallows. The last day only will declare how much crime might have been spared, had wives known, and loved, and practised the important duties of good housewives. A step higher we find the maid-of-all-work driven to despair and ruin, not only by her own ignorance, but the ignorance and negligence of the mistress to whom she vainly looks for help and instruction in the work of the kitchen, the parlour, and the wash-house. Higher still in the social scale, we find the husband's affection alienated, his temper soured, and harsh looks and voices taking the place of the old loving ones, because the wife dislikes or looks down upon the domestic duties, which, if she did but "tincture" with the right hope and motive, would be "turned into gold." It is an old proverb, often quoted and generally believed, that when poverty enters the door, love flies out at the window. It is a painful truth that household affection takes flight when household discomfort enters; but in most cases this is *not* caused by the unavoidable privations and sufferings of poverty sent straight from the hand of God. British hus-

bands, as well as British wives, can endure trial bravely, and bow under its yoke meekly, and can love and cherish each other "for richer for poorer." But it is when unnecessary discomfort, faulty ignorance, and wilful mismanagement, find an entrance into the household, that the husband's affection, looking justly to the original cause of these miserable effects, takes its reluctant and melancholy flight.

In still higher circles, where the housewife has under her authority many to whom she can say "Go," and they go, or "Come," and they come, the consequences of wilful ignorance and incapacity are quite as sad, though not so open. If, unlike the noble woman in Proverbs, she looks not "well to the ways of her household," what ruin and misery she spreads amongst her servants and her dependents! How many young handmaidens can trace their destruction to being in "easy places," where they and the presiding lady were strangers, though under the same roof! Truly, the rocks are many, and the sea-paths intricate, and the mariner needs to look well to the compass.

Second, The influence which one housewife has over many. I heard a homely story told on a platform the other day, which illustrates this point. A ragged, dirty boy, on his first day of introduction into Dr. Guthrie's school, had his face and hands washed. When he returned, his mother was lost in amazement at the unusual brightness and beauty of the

little face, and declared that she "wadna ha'e kened her ain bairn." Further, she resolved on trying the experiment of washing her own face and hands. Then looking around, it struck her that the house looked dingier and dirtier than usual. She knew little or nothing about household work, and the praise and the honour of being a good housewife were as words of a strange language. Deep down, however, there was something of a woman's instinct for the beauty of order. So she washed, and scrubbed, and "tidied up," and was looking around breathless, but well pleased, when a neighbour came in, and lifted up her hands and eyes.

"Eh, Mrs. Black, what's come to ye? Ye're surely up in the world the day."

"Weel, Mrs. Brown, it's just that Tammy's got his face washed, and I washed mine, and then I put things a bit straight, and it feels unco pleasant like!"

Back went Mrs. Brown to her comfortless room. It would not do to be behind her neighbour, so soap and water found a place where long they had been strangers. What further reformation ensued I cannot tell; but it is almost a necessary consequence that the good beginning went on, so much are we all the creatures of influence and example, not only among the poor, but in all ranks. The woman who takes a high, noble view of the home position in which God has placed her, whatever rank of life she may be in,

who does her work from day to day with the pure love of God in her heart, subduing her natural dislike to "housekeeping," or her ambitious longings for "higher work," or work that would give more food for self-applause, will assuredly spread the good leaven in many other households, both high and low. I would the more insist upon this point, because household error and ignorance, arising from contempt of the nature of the work, are very generally found, not only among the frivolous and foolish, but in minds of a higher order, and consequently exerting greater influence over others. Women graced with gifts of intellect and imagination are too apt to consider as wasted the time spent in ordering and considering the household meals—the store-room deficiencies—the daily duties of each domestic. Daughters, and neighbours, and visitors are influenced to admire the one and look down upon the other; and who knows to what depths of social life that stone of evil and false influence, when once set rolling, may descend! Oh, if gifted women would but consider it their highest gift to be permitted to do the will of God, "whether they eat or whether they drink!" If they could but see now as they will see in the light of eternity, the strength and honour, the favour and praise attaching to the good housewife who does all her work in the fear of the Lord, they would hasten to employ their gifts and their influence in doing likewise. Still more subtle is the evil, and still worse

is the influence when women of high Christian profession fall into the same snare. Their hands and their feet are active in all external good works—their names blazoned everywhere as doers of good deeds, and attenders at every kind of public meeting and association. Their prayers are frequent and sincere for the Spirit of God to dwell in their hearts, and their efforts for the salvation of souls are active and constant. Yet, such women are heard bewailing the necessity of giving thought and heed to home work; they sever the two services, and consider every moment that is not spent in the direct and visible work of the Church, as spent in the service of the world. They forget that if they are led by the Spirit, every day and all day, that no daily work can separate them from His gracious companionship, that He must be as much with them in the kitchen as in the prayer-meeting, at the account-book as in the Sabbath class; that He will enable them to speak of Jesus as forcibly in the performance for Him of all duty, as by the tongue or the pen. Bezaleel and Aholiab were “FILLED with the Spirit of God in all manner of workmanship;” what more could be said of the high priest in the Holy of Holies? It is not told of all the women whose hearts stirred them up in wisdom that they ministered in the tabernacle, or sang hallelujahs before the Lord of glory, but “that they did spin goat’s hair, and brought that which they span.” It may seem a high reach of spirituality to

despise the sphere in which God has placed us, but it is the poorest and narrowest and easiest attainment of all.

Third, The observation of others. It is true that every Englishman's "house is his castle;" it is true that our houses have no loopholes like the prison of Lafayette. Yet there is a social observation and criticism of a Christian household, a regard to which, though it must not degenerate into the fussy apprehension of "What will Mrs. Grundy say?" ought to have its right place in the motives of the woman "professing godliness." "What have they seen in thy house?" is a question from the God of all the families of the earth, which will one day resound painfully in the ears of many professing Christians. Remember that much more is involved in housewifely management than the glorification or humiliation of the housewife, and the comfort or discomfort of the husband. We are the servants of the Lord Christ, and if we do His work ill, the Master's cause and glory suffers in us and by us. What then have those around us seen in our houses? Have they seen the cleanliness, purity, and order, which are emblems of the renewed heart and the justified soul? Have they seen the energy and activity which the Spirit of God will increase and sanctify in those who have them as natural gifts, and which He will bestow on those who have them not, when they ask for them in all earnestness and sincerity?

Fourth, The great encouragements which are held out to us. Let us take the full comfort and the full lesson from the fact that Jesus knows our abode. If His "eyes behold," His "*eyelids try*" the children of men. While His piercing eyes see the failures, His tender heart feels the difficulties, and He veils the keen vision with interposing eyelids. While He is grieved when we are careless, He rejoices when we are prayerful, humble, and diligent in all our work, even though not crowned by success. It is not so in the world's history, where "success makes the man." The general who would be tried by a court-martial were his brave venture a failure, is crowned as a hero because it succeeds. But our gracious Saviour is far otherwise. "She hath done what she could," are words of cheer and encouragement to all women in all ages. When the daily work has been prayed over, and planned with the heart and eye "looking to Jesus," it may safely be left in calmness and comfort to Him who careth for us. Success may be withheld, but the blessing will come, though we may not see how or when. It is only the careless, indifferent worker who need fear the sympathising eyes of Him who knows our hearts and accepts the willing mind, and whose desire is that we work within our house with a "perfect," that is, with a "sincere" heart.

What a beautiful Christ-like home that of Jesus of Nazareth must have been ! Our introduction to it is one of the most touching episodes in the Gospel history.

The two disciples, breathless from the imperfectly-understood teaching of John, come to this mysterious Rabbi, and say unto him, "Master, where dwellest thou?" Jesus saith unto them, "Come and see." "They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day." Not in consequence of John's proclamation, but from what they saw of the Saviour in that blessed home, did they go forth and say, "We have found the Christ." No easy matter is it indeed to have Christ-like houses. No easy matter even with the appliances of modern wealth and comfort: but oh! how much more difficult for those who have little money, little space, little strength, little time! Still for such there is the cheering thought of her who was the carpenter's wife, and mother and housekeeper of the blessed Nazareth home. For all domestic difficulties and emergencies we find words of comfort in that wonderful book, every part of which is profitable for reproof and for instruction. The daily work of woman's life is so exactly like a wheel going round and round, every day the same, laden with occupations which do seem very much of the earth earthy, that I have often found the greatest comfort and encouragement from what may seem a fanciful and, of course, a secondary meaning to put upon these words of Ezekiel—"And when the living creatures went the wheels went by them; and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth the wheels were lifted up. Whithersoever the spirit was to go

they went, and thither was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them; for the Spirit of Life (margin) was in the wheels. When those went, these went; and when those stood these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them, for the Spirit of Life was in the wheels.”* Yes, that is the only way to get our work lifted up from the earth, to set it upon wheels moved with the breath, and anointed with the oil, of the Spirit of Life! The unction of the Holy One, the fresh oil from the living Olive Tree, is what alone can keep the wheels of our lives from jars and creaks, and from sinking into the ruts of the road.

There is one result of well-ordered household machinery which is very little aimed at by housewives, especially by those who are their own servants, but which is attainable by all who are the mothers of girls. That is to have it so ordered that the wheels will go smoothly round, even when the mother is from sickness or other causes laid aside. It is a temptation to cottage mothers to do things themselves, and not to “bother” with teaching children to do them. The consequence is that when the mother cannot work nobody else can, and the house is in the most miserably-managed state till the turner of the wheels is at her work again; but a far more extended evil is also the result. The cottage

* Ezekiel i. 19—21.

homes of Great Britain are to a great extent the nurseries of our young servants. Yet how many of them enter into household service ignorant of their duties, because their mothers, good and stirring housewives themselves, did all the work—never thought of patient, painstaking teaching of common things—and encouraged their daughters to do crochet, learn dancing, and go out to see the daughters of the land.

One very important part of wheel work is the machinery which belongs to the preparation of food, and which, though considered by many as unimportant, may well come under the Spirit's influence. That our Saviour Himself thought of this is very evident from His own blessed household words, after recalling the dead to resume the homely functions of life. "And he commanded that something should be given her to eat." There was a certain sort of food used in Sparta called "black broth," which was so unpalatable that other nations used to say that they did not wonder the Spartans were fearless of death! I am afraid that the food which some of our housewives give their husbands is of such a nature, and so ill-cooked, that it makes them fearless of death,—the death to soul and body which comes from frequenting the tavern and beer-shop. Ah! the devil knows better how to deal with husbands than their wives do; he takes care to have his gin-palaces clean, and comfortable, and tempting, and the suppers he gives the victims of vice are always well-cooked and neatly set

down. If Christian housewives would learn a lesson from these things they would take a formidable weapon out of the enemy's hand. Evil-doers learn to do their work much more thoroughly than well-wishers, alas! Did you ever notice how well the rebels of Babel set to work, burning their bricks *thoroughly*,—no imperfect work was that monument of Satanic pride and presumption! How different from the mere "getting through," or "through other" work which we put upon our daily reasonable service!

When illness attacks the housewife it is difficult indeed to have the daily wheels so oiled with grace as to go on smoothly without making husband and children, and small servant, if there be one, pay the penalty in their own persons of the "trouble" that has come to the house. It is difficult, but all things are possible to her that believeth. From the noisy room, from the stifling sick bed, from the weary frame, with its thrilling sinking nerves, may go up a voice which will bring down Omnipotence to help! The blessed all-powerful Jesus, who knew every wrung nerve, every weary strain, can so help, so teach, so inform with wisdom that the sick mother will say and do just the right thing, that she will bear with meekness, keep in the murmur and the cross word, and will arise, thanking God in the name of herself and her household, that she had thus been led "to hang her helpless soul on Him." More difficult and more frequent is the languor and the sinking of those

who are not ill enough "to give in," and take the rest they so sorely need, and just ill enough to make each duty of the day a heavy burden. Ah! but in yonder press there is a foe making each moment of the day heavier, and making the morrow heavier still, and taking away all hope of re-strung nerves and stronger limbs. The bottle! I do not mean the bottle of the drunkard—far from it—only just the cordial of the still sober woman, ordered by the doctor, it may be, but poison still! How many women on the broad road to destruction can trace their wretched habits to the glass of whiskey at extra times when "the sinkings" come on! I am convinced, from a long experience of sinkings of every description, that alcohol only increases the evil, and that a glass of simple hot water, a crust of bread, or, still better, a small cup of beef-tea—not such an unattainable luxury where bottles and tobacco are resolutely banished—act nearly as well at the time, and prevent the far worse recurrence of the faintness. Where the bottle finds no place we are certainly more likely to find realised the beautiful picture of the poet of a Husband's Happy Home:

" His wee bit ingle blinkin' bonnily,
His clean hearth stane, his thriftie wife's smile,
The lispin infant prattling on her knee,
Does a' his weary carking cares beguile,
And makes him quite forget his labour and his toil."

The preceding remarks have been addressed to Christian women, who, feeling their own weakness,

and anxiously desiring to be better stewards of their home talents, and, like Moses, and One greater than Moses, to be "faithful in all their house," are willing to listen to the words of one herself only struggling to perform household duties with a "perfect heart," though imperfect success. But women, destitute of the grand motive and end of work, must beware lest they make an idol of their house-work. It will only be kept in its right place by those who are serving the right Master. Many a well-constituted, well-arranged household is more displeasing in His sight than the one where the house-wife is toiling, as it would appear, almost in vain; because in the one is absent what is written on the other—"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." A woman may obtain the fame of a good house-wife, and yet all her skill, order, and economy may be offered up on the shrine of the idol SELF, instead of being done to the glory of God. There may be "washing with nitre and much soap, and yet iniquity marked before the Lord." I have been in an Irish cabin, so clean and airy, with its polished furniture and blooming roses, that, save for the loaded gun standing in the corner, I might have been in a cottage of a fair English village; yet the souls in that cabin were in thick darkness. The building may be white and lovely, though it only contains death, like the painted sepulchres described by our Lord, beautiful without, and within full of dead bones.

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VIII.

ORDER! ORDER! how beautiful is ORDER!
Of household warp and weft the lovely border,
She who its happy laws doth give due honour,
Gets gifts from God, of all good things the donor.

Order! order! oh, love-preserving order!
Of all home-ties the firm and stedfast corder,—
She who its bands upon her neck hath taken,
From household hearts she will not soon be shaken.

Order! order! how bless'd a thing is order!
Where fear of God dwells also guide and warder.
Husband at home, and son no more a stranger,
The housewife's heart is quiet from fear of danger.

M. M. G.

IX.

ORDER IN THE HOUSE.

"Let all things be done in order."—1 Cor. xiv. 40.

"ORDER! Order in the House!"

So does the Speaker of the House of Commons call out very frequently—and so do we now, once for all, in our small way. There is nothing like order—for the rich and the poor—order, in the *boudoir* of the wealthy—the domicile and chambers, the workshops and warerooms of the busy—and in the cozy "but and ben" of the humble cottager. Order is everything in schemes and enterprises on a great scale, and in the daily doings of ordinary life. It is the principle that holds society together,—it is the cement of churches, and the mainspring of family happiness and individual comfort. It is the groove in which the great machine of life moves smoothly,—it keeps the mind serene, and the temper sweet.

People marry—gentle and simple, they do marry, and will marry, and, under proper conditions and suitable circumstances, ought to marry—be it a laird with a lady, a captain in the army with the niece of an admiral, my lord's gamekeeper with the dairy-maid's daughter, or a shepherd of the plain with "the lass of Patie's mill." But in so serious and

weighty an affair, before the proposer proceeds with his intentions, or utters a word, it were well if, among other things, he could ascertain how the wardrobe and the work-basket of the *proposee* are kept, and if there be a natural taste for regularity and habits of order manifested in these, as well as in still more important points. For little things are often very significant, and sometimes the lesser may determine the greater, and be a clue to the discovery of that which will be a blessing or a curse to all parties during the whole of after-life. In like manner, let the *proposee* be on her guard. Is he a man of business who seeks you? Try to ascertain at what hour he seats himself at his writing-table, and how his papers are laid out upon it. Should he happen to be a country gentleman, a look at the lawn and the shrubberies, the garden, the fences, and the farm steadings may easily be obtained, and might be useful. Or, finally, should the proposer be a good-looking fellow, in humble life like your own, watch his movements for a while, his punctuality and regularity during the hours of labour, the methods by which he works, and how he keeps and lays aside his tools, his exactness in Church attendance, and the order he observes in all his home habits; and then, if every other thing be right and satisfactory, and your heart bids you, by all means settle the question. Rely upon it, there is a wonderful connection between method in outward and ordinary things and

the inward character of people, which may almost be known by the way in which they put out their shoes at the door of their room in an hotel, or lay aside their garments on the chair before retiring to rest at night.

We once had occasion to be present at a consultation in the law apartments of the late Attorney-General. What piles of papers connected with a multitude of cases were spread out upon the tables all around the room, and in such orderly array! And when we came to discuss with the great lawyer himself the matter on hand, we saw that his room was, as it were, a reflection from his mind, in which the whole points of our case were regularly laid out, and had been separately thought over, with a degree of order and distinctness that speedily led to a solution of all its difficulties, which was followed by an instant decision as to the course to be pursued. Ten minutes with such a man brought to an issue what with other minds, less clear and orderly, it would have required the better part of an hour to unravel and determine. But from the chambers of a distinguished man, we must descend to more common scenes, and to ordinary men—or rather women, for the present.

What a scene of disorder and discomfort have we sometimes seen in a cottage, even when it was situated among some of the loveliest scenes of nature! All *higgledy-piggledy* without, and all *hogry-mogry** within

* Scotch expressions signifying disorder.

—litter in the court, and confusion in the cabin, and all about the doors—everything stowed away anyhow, and anywhere, and nothing in its place! We dwell not upon it—for it is loathsome; but would rather draw a picture of a different kind. Look in at that lowly door, survey that humble room, and see how everything is just *where* it should be, and *as* it should be. The floor is clean and bright—the plates all shining on the shelf, with the knives and spoons and forks—the pots and pans neatly arranged beneath the table or the dresser, and thoroughly scoured—the chairs and stools each in their proper place, and every article in the old-fashioned cupboard, with its glass door, laid out as if it were a museum. The spinning-wheel is at one side of the room, the reel and the old arm-chair at the other, the eight-day clock in the corner, and *Grimalkin* purring at the chimney cheek, as if saying to herself, “How beautiful is order, and what a comfortable home is this!” And so it is, and a pretty sight too! We sometimes speak of the “face of things,” and as the face is but the outward expression of the inward character, so the face of these things is the index to the long-established habits of the worthy woman who sits in the midst of them, and, with her spectacles on her nose, is busy sewing a camlet doublet for her youngest grandson. She was a blythe and bonnie woman in her day, and she is a blythe and bonnie woman still—at once a picture and a pattern to the whole parish. Always tidy in her

own person, most exact in the whole of her household arrangements, and neat-handed in everything, she trained her family in the same habits, and silently proclaimed to all around her, "what a blessed thing is order, and what happiness it can confer!" She has several daughters: the youngest of them bides by her mother; the eldest is married to an orderly man—all right, and so much the better for her; and the others may also be some day settled in houses of their own, when some respectable and orderly men have sufficient discernment to find out their value, and worth enough to win their hearts. In the meantime, the second daughter is the one of whom we have a story to tell in illustration of the quality we are now commending. This young woman, with naturally a good understanding and no lack of common sense, has a wonderful love of order, and a turn for everything that is orderly. She is in the service of a family in one of the large towns. Her mistress says she is "a perfect treasure," and her master does not know how they could get on without her. She has the management of almost everything in the house, every room and closet in which, as well as the pantry and every press, is as clean as the inside of a cockle-shell. The lumber-room seems to contain no lumber, and her very dusters are becoming. By her art the washings are made easy, and the laundry is a joy. She has nothing to hide, or to put out of the way, when any one comes in unexpectedly upon her when she is at

work, and for making up a fire, switching the hearth-stone, and keeping the shovel, the poker, and tongs, and the ribs of the grate all polished and shining, she is perfect. But one of her chief *knacks* is her way of packing a trunk. One day her master was later than usual in coming home to dinner, and when at six o'clock he came, he informed his wife that business required his immediate presence in London—that he must set off in less than two hours—and might be detained a fortnight. This announcement occasioned some sorrow in the house ; but no fuss, no worry, no running of people backwards and forwards, and knocking one another over. The arrangements for his journey and his stay in London were all committed into the hands of one who knew so well how to conduct them, and in an instant she betook herself to the packing of his trunk. What her master needed, and what he might require, was considered. His body clothes were first laid out, and then carefully laid in, every button having been first examined. After that, his linens—stockings, and shirts, collars, handkerchiefs, neckcloths and night-caps—were arranged, so that none of them might be crumpled or crushed, and the corners and interstices were all filled up by the smaller articles, while in the proper compartment were placed the boots and the shoes, the brushes, the dressing and writing materials—a proper place being reserved for those indispensable travelling companions, a Bible and a book or two.

At length (and yet we should not say at length, for in no length of time was it done) all was complete, and the trunk was made as compact as a beehive—some space being left for any *orra** thing that her master might fancy in London—for instance a new dress for the mistress of the house; and all that our noble packer, our woman of order, was heard to say, as if to herself, was this, “Well, now, that’s the thing, all is *snod*.”*

It has been said that we can judge of the force of the hit by the rebound. And to know how nicely the trunk had been packed, one would need to have seen the condition of its hapless owner (who had not the same faculty as his servant), when on leaving London on his return home, he had himself to re-pack it. It was like attempting to crush a haystack into a bathing machine! He sorted and arranged—he re-sorted and arranged again—he sat upon the trunk—he jumped upon it, and thumped upon it, and danced upon it, but all would not do: he called out audibly, “O Meysie, Meysie! surely you’re a witch!”—and then he summoned the porter of the hotel to his help. He in his turn stamped and groaned, first got into a violent perspiration, and then into a passion, but it was a desperate case and must be given up. So a number of the articles had to be taken out, and the trunk was locked without them. These were

* *Orra-snod*, Scotch words, the nearest translation to which is *extra-snug*.

wrapped up in a sheet of brown paper—no address was put upon it—it was to be carried in the hand of the unlucky traveller, and was lost by the way—with a new silk gown in it for the lady wife, and many other things, which were never heard of more !

But let us be grave. The Lord who created all things is the God of order. It is an attribute of His attributes—it pervades all His works. When He formed and fashioned this world, chaos fled and order came. There is Divine order in the mechanism and movements of the heavenly bodies. These resplendent orbs that roll above us and stud the sky—how they keep their places, and observe their times to a very moment ! In the natural structure of the earth, too, there is order—in mountain and valley, in woods and waters, order with beautiful variety. In the immortal mind of man originally there was order also ; but sin disarranged it, and moral chaos came. Yet is there a process of restoration and redemption proceeding ; in the purpose and plan of which there is infinite wisdom and power, justice and mercy, righteousness and love—all combined with order. And in due season there will be perfect harmony and order in the universe—never more to be disturbed. Order is to be reckoned among the Christian graces. “Set thine house then *in order*, for thou mayest die, and not live ;” and “thy sins may be set *in order* before thee,” thy “secret sins in the light of God’s countenance.”—But “the steps of a good man are

ordered by the Lord," and He will show him His covenant—that "everlasting covenant which is *ordered* in all things and sure." "To him," saith He, "that *ordereth* his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God." AVUS.

THE SAD EFFECTS OF SMALL NEGLECTS.

A FRENCH gentleman tells the following story :—

Being in the country, I had an example of those losses to which families are exposed from sheer carelessness. The latchet had been broken and lost, and had never been replaced, which fastened the wicket of a barn-yard looking into the fields, and of course it was left open, and remained flapping to and fro in the wind. So the poultry often escaped and were lost; and one day a fine pig got out, and ran into the woods. Immediately all the world was after it. The gardener, the cook, the dairymaid—all ran to recover the animal. The gardener got sight of it first, and jumping over a ditch to stop it, sprained his ankle, and was confined for a long time to the house. The cook, on her return, found all the linen that had been left by the fire to dry, singed or burned; and the dairymaid, having run off before she had tied up the cows, found that one of them had broken the leg of a colt in the stable. The gardener's lost time was worth twenty crowns, valuing his pain at nothing. The linen burned, and the colt spoiled were worth as much more. Here was a loss of forty crowns, and

much suffering, trouble, and vexation for the want of a latchet, which would not have cost more than threepence !

Is there almost a household in our own country that has not experienced much plague and inconvenience from the effects of some similar piece of carelessness and neglect ? Take a word of warning from this short story, and be wise in time. Get every latchet instantly repaired. "A stitch in time saves nine." "For want of a nail the shoe was lost ; for want of a shoe the horse was lost."

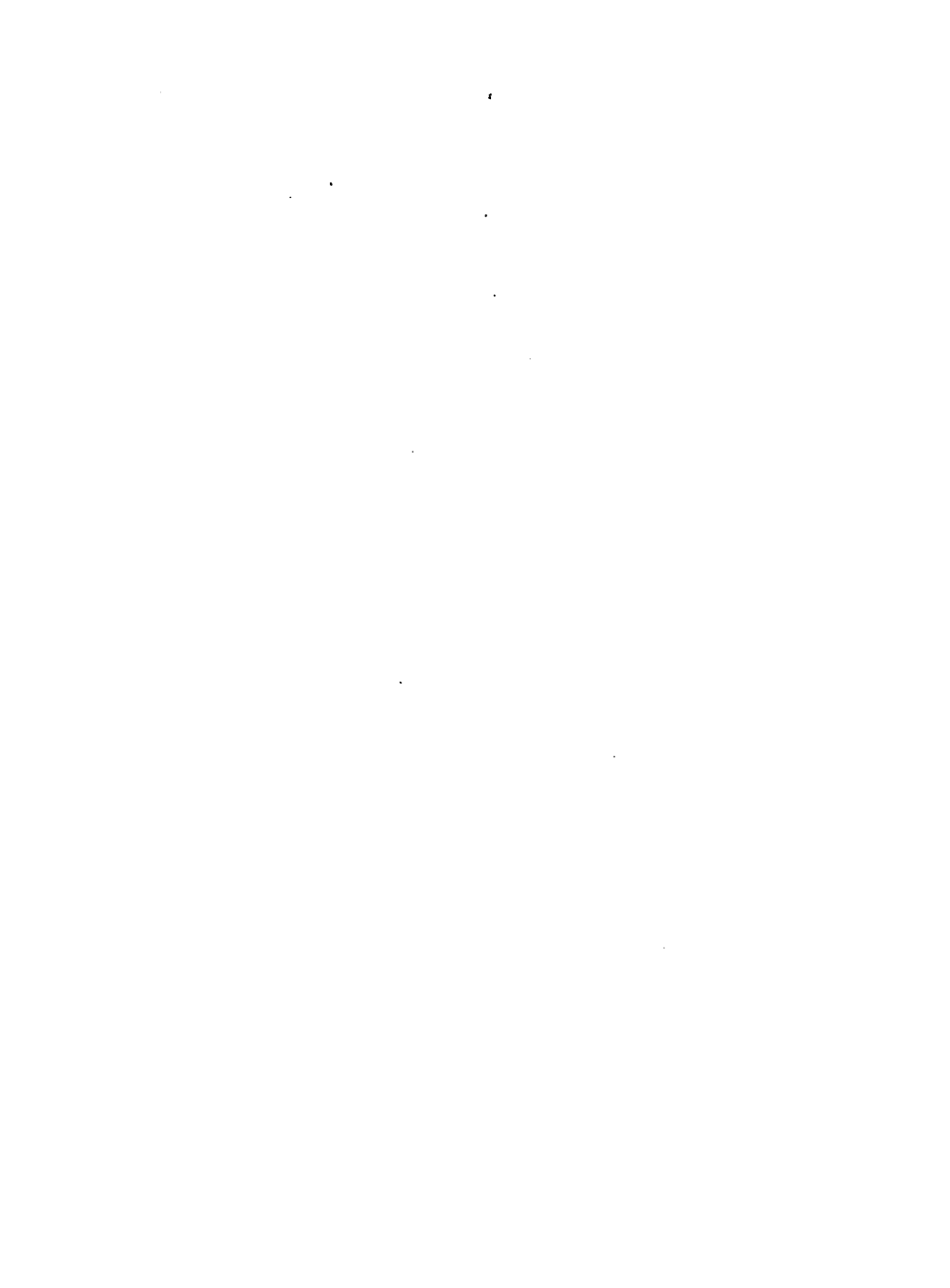
AVUS.

IX.

“ God has giv'n to each his station ;
Some have riches and high place,
Some have lowly homes and labour,—
All may have his precious grace.
And God loveth all his children,
Rich and poor, and high and low ;
And they all shall meet in heaven,
Who have served Him here below.”

“ All may of Thee partake, nothing can be too mean,
Which with this tincture (for Thy sake) will not grow bright
and clean ;
A servant with this clause makes drudgerie divine,
Who sweeps a floor as for Thy laws, makes that and the action fine.
This is the famous stone that turneth all to gold,
For that which God doth touch and own cannot for lesse be told.”

HERBERT.



IX.

YOUNG SERVANTS.

“Exhort servants . . . that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.”—Titus ii. 9, 10.

“For ye serve the Lord Christ.”—Col. iii. 24.

“DON’T send your clothes home to your mother to wash and mend,” said a considerate mistress to a “new girl.” “You have plenty of time to do it yourself.” “Please, ma’am, I don’t know how.” “Well, then, you shall be taught, for it is high time you did know how.” “Please, ma’am, I don’t want to learn!” I am afraid that want of ambition, so to speak, and desire to improve on the part of our young servants, is in great measure the cause of the universal complaint of their uselessness in a house. They “don’t care” whether they learn to be good servants or not. It is all a matter of haphazard indifference, and their greatest wish is to be “comfortable” in their place, and have as little trouble as possible. It is true that often the activity of mothers, and their dislike to the trouble of teaching, is a disadvantage to young girls; but how often even this arises from the carelessness and indifference of their daughters, who make it a toil to be taught by their already wearied mothers! Another thing is that they are not “to the manner born,” at least in Scotland.

With many sterling good qualities, and much superior intelligence amongst our women, there is—alas! that I should have to confess it—a difference between the habits of Scotland and England. The class from whence young servants are generally taken in England have cleaner houses, prettier gardens, better cooked food, less practical acquaintance with that foe to family order and training—the whisky bottle, than the same class in Scotland. Cleanliness, household economy, and good work of all kinds come more naturally, as it were, to the Englishwoman than to the Scotchwoman. Only those who have dwelt in Scotland, and studied the habits of its people, can know the extreme natural difficulties presented by the absence of early training in Scottish cottage-homes, and by the indifference to comfort and order which is more frequently found in them than in English dwellings of precisely the same rank. The evil, however, exists in every country, and it is therefore long before young girls, however well-principled, learn to consider as serious faults the habits which they have seen practised by respected and respectable parents and neighbours, and to which they have grown so familiar as to be actually insensible of their presence and effects—even as the ear grows unconscious of the ticking of the clock, or the sound of the waterfall. Nay, I believe that there are many cases where, in spite of many earnest struggles, the roots of early habit and ingrained nature are *never*

eradicated. Dust seems always to increase, instead of being vigorously removed—floors get blacker—chops and steaks greasier and grimmer—seams more crooked, and time more scarce on some young servants' hands. Time, O precious time! This anecdote of a Red Indian might be useful to many a white Britain. "An Indian chief of the Six Nations once said a wiser thing than any philosopher. A white man remarked in his hearing that he had not time enough. 'Well,' replied the Red Jacket, gruffly, 'I suppose you have *all there is*!' He is the wisest and best man who can crowd the most good actions into *NOW*."—That is the best and wisest young servant who strives to do the work well of her daily "*NOW*."

Still worse is it when this imperfect service is found in those young servants who profess godliness—members of Sabbath classes, and even of the Communion of Christ. Perhaps a not uncommon cause may be found in the want of practical Scriptural teaching at the time of conversion, so that the young are left to indulge in false views of spirituality, and while they delight in prayer meetings and religious reading, too often look upon practical work as worldliness and waste of time. That this is a great and fearful mistake we find from the whole teaching of Scripture. Practical work, well performed for the Lord, is itself a worship. It is striking how often the chosen messengers of God's highest work were taken from ordinary service,—well

performed, we cannot doubt. Amos, the prophet of the Lord, was a gatherer of summer fruit as well as a herdsman; David was a skilled shepherd of sheep; Gideon, a thresher of wheat; Paul, a tent-maker; Peter, a fisherman; Bezaleel and Aholiab were taught by the Spirit to carve wood, and to embroider linen, as well as the wise-hearted women to spin wool, and to sew and shape garments. The means of getting the great Assyrian captain cured was a little maid in service. The ploughman is "instructed to discretion" how to break the clods, and the sower to cast in the grain, by his God; and the best way to manage the "bread corn also cometh forth from the Lord of Hosts."* Joseph, before he was ruler of Egypt, as a young servant was so faithful in the house of his master, that all saw that the Lord was with him, and all his work was prospered. Moses kept a flock of sheep in the recesses of the desert before he was the lawgiver of Israel. Think not, then, that the Lord of all service, whether of the household or the universe, will leave one young servant girl to struggle on unaided if she honestly goes to Him for help. Ah, *this* is the only way to remove the stigma which the enemy delights to attach to Christian servants. I have read the statement in a Sunday periodical that "very religious women often turn out the worst servants in the place," and of four girls who appeared really to

* See a remarkable passage, Isaiah xxviii. 23—29.

have had their hearts changed, the same article went on to tell that when situations were procured for these girls, "not one had given satisfaction,"—because "one was so rough and ill-mannered, she could not be trusted to attend upon children; a second was dirty and lazy; a third, forgetful and careless; while a fourth, was, after a month's trial, sent home with the character from the mistress that she wasted more cloth than her services were worth, and was totally careless as to how her work was done." When these things happen, it is certainly not because they have "got religion," but because they have not got enough religion; still there is sufficient truth in the charge to enable us to learn three things from friendly criticisms of this sort.

1st. That those Christian servants who are *not* faithful, diligent, and skilful in their work, down to its smallest particulars, bring discredit upon the religion they profess,—and lay themselves open to the charge of hypocrisy. How grievous this must be to Him who took upon Himself "the form of a servant," and whose eyes are upon those who have charge of "a few things!" 2nd. That when young servants are in the habit of failing frequently in their work—when their Christianity does not render them more cleanly, more punctual, more diligent, more attentive, better tempered,—it would be good to ask a question of themselves which, whether they hear it or not, will be sure to be a question among others, answered,

it may be by scoffs at the GOOD MASTER thus dishonoured by his professed followers,—“*Am I a living Christian? or have I only a name to live while I am dead?*” Whatever the answer may be, it need not, must not bring doubts or despair, but it must send each instantly, whether as a backslider, or an inconsistent believer, or a self-deceived professor, to the blood of Jesus Christ, which is ready to wash away *all* manner of unrighteousness. Then will each be ready to begin again in the daily strife—to take up the daily cross—to learn meekly the daily work. Then, and not till then, will be taken off the reproach brought by its enemies against the Gospel, that its professed receivers are *not* among “the best” in their ranks—that they are not “aristocrats” in their work. Try, then, O my dear young friends, to cultivate this noble ambition—take it with you into the smallest and humblest department of your work, and you will find how it purifies and ennobles it. The butter and cheese of the Christian servant ought to be the best in the country side, her cows the best tended, her kitchen the cleanest, her washing the quickest done, her sewing the neatest, her manners the most respectful, her temper the sweetest and the most yielding. 3rd. That the “great matters of the law” are not sufficient. Honesty, sobriety, truthfulness, chastity, are *essential* to the Christian servant, even as the great beams of wood, and the strong foundation, and the corner-stones are necessary to the building of a house,

which yet would be in a wretched state, were it not "packed" with many a small, apparently worthless stone, and many a lesser plank. Let none, therefore, plume themselves on their great qualities, however valuable they may be, not even on their spirituality, or their religious zeal, while there are those loopholes of ill-performed daily work in their Christian character which let in the wind and the rain—aye, and the fiery darts of Satan. Let them rather be humbled in the very dust because of their deficiencies, and learn with all meekness, even from the unconverted,—how to become "Good and Faithful servants."

X.

“ ‘Gather the fragments!’ waste befitteth none,
The LORD who made each flower, each star, each sun,
In justest measure, and exactest plan,
Preached thus economy to spendthrift man.”



X.

THE GARDOER.

"Gather up the fragments that remain that nothing be lost."—John vi. 12.

"Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things."—Matt. xxv. 21.

IN a family where I was very intimate in my early days, and in whose society I spent many peaceful and happy hours, there resided, as one of the household, a notable woman, to whom was given, by universal consent, the kindly and familiar name of the "*Gar-doer*." "*Gar*" is a good old Scotch word, signifying "to cause or compel," and two other verbs in that expressive language were often on the lips of Jeany Walker (for that was the real name of the *Gardoer*), which may help to give some insight into that feature of her character to which I am directing attention. One of these words was *taping*, that is saving—the other *haining*, which signifies economising, sparing, or laying up. She was humble, yet active—quiet, but very discerning, discriminating, and managing—holding the place of an upper servant or sort of housekeeper,—and the title I have mentioned she had obtained from her extraordinary faculty of *garring*.

everything do! Not pinching, hard, or niggardly was she, nor shabby in any degree; far less selfish or ungenerous, for she would have done anything that was suitable and right to satisfy and please every one around her, and was particularly patient with children. Neither was she self-sufficient, or fussy, or interfering, or dictatorial in carrying on her domestic duties, as many of her class are. But she was wise, prudent, and thrifty, and was possessed of a large share of common sense, insomuch that by her forethought and reflection, her ingenuity and expertness, she saved many a good silver shilling which otherwise might have been thrown away, and which went to the doing of some substantial good, or was expended in a consistent course of Christian benevolence, on the part of her mistress and her family, or by herself. Did a young lady of the family, on going out of an evening on a visit, say that she must really get a new dress, or a new tippet, for she was a perfect fright to be seen in the only one she had to put on,—the *Garloer* would interpose, and gently yet firmly say, “Ye must *gar* it do, both this night, and for a while to come; it is quite good and whole, and but little the waur for the wear;” and then, in a coaxing kind of way, she would add, “and it is really very bonnie and becoming forbye, my dear!” Did one of the young gentlemen come in of an afternoon, with the sleeve of his coat all tattered and torn, and declare that he never could wear it any more,—“Dinna say that,

my pretty lad," would be the *Gardoer's* words to him, "I'll *gar* it do, and it will be all snod and right lang before you need it again." And in the morning he would find it at his bedside, so nicely stitched and thoroughly mended, that he could scarcely tell where the rent had been. Not a few condemned bonnets, half-worn shoes, and seedy carpets and bedquilts were by her means reclaimed for prolonged use, and many similar things did the *Gardoer* *gar* do !

Even her mistress was known to have said to her one day when some friends had come unexpectedly to dine with her, "Now, Jeany, what shall we do, when we have only one egg in the house, and it would require three at least to make the pudding as it ought to be?" "I'll *gar* the ane do," was the reply, and the pudding was pronounced to be as good as possible ! On another day, when the roast was being put to the kitchen fire, the spit accidentally fell on the floor and was broken in two, and both the cook and her work were brought to a dead stop ! "Never mind," said the *Gardoer*, "there was aince a wife that took what she had, and she never wanted," and, running into one of the rooms, she rummaged out the ramrod of an old but well-burnished firelock that stood in the corner, and flew back to the kitchen, calling out to the astonished cook, "I'll *gar* this do," and in a minute or two (although in what manner I cannot very well say) she converted the ramrod into a spit, and all the anticipated mischief was prevented ; and after the ramrod

had been scoured up, it was pronounced to be "not a hair the waur!"

Many other contrivances did she fall upon when domestic dilemmas occurred, and makeshifts had to be resorted to. In this respect she was a perfect contrast to many who are always either creating difficulties, or magnifying those which are inevitable, and who, with their hands hanging down and a startled wild-deer look in their eyes, can do nothing but mope and murmur, or groan and cry. Everything came, somehow, readily to the hand of the *Gardoer*, and nothing wrong, and all obstructions seemed to disappear before the dexterous and cheerful way in which she met them. Then, again, in the ordinary affairs of the family, nothing could exceed her expertness and judicious economy. She could not bear to see people (as was the case in some other households) live "at hack and manger," as she said, and waste the gifts of Providence. Not only in the art of cooking, but even in that of carving, she gave out many a useful hint, so that, duly and daintily, her cold meat might make its appearance on another day. And whether in the cleaning of the interior works of the door-locks, or the repairing of the bell-wires—in the carefully pulling the currants, and making and papering the jelly, and all other matters of that sort, everything seemed to come readily to her hand, and was done well. So, also, in dealing out articles for household use, whether it was cheese, candles, or

curry—soap, soda, starch, or blue—there was always a sufficient supply provided, but never a particle lost. And for a sick room, oh what a treasure she was! But on this I must not enter.

I have adverted to her patience with children. And it was not patience only for which she was exemplary, but shrewdness and sagacity also in her manner of dealing with them, as well as with those who were somewhat more advanced in life. “Do you ever take a hammer to break an egg?” (the *Gardoer*, as must already have been observed, was great in the use of proverbs!) said she to one of the boys, when with his penknife he was hacking away at a piece of wood which he wanted to divide, and, taking it up, in a trice she cracked it in two across her knee! Upon some other occasion, did he give proof of quickness and ingenuity, “Aye,” she would say, “a horn-spoonful of mother-wit is worth a college education.” Or was he “fairly fickled,” as he termed it, with some point in his arithmetic or his translations, “Flinch not, my brave boy,” she would say to him, with a tap on his shoulder; “go back to your rules,” or “take to your dictionary—and no more about it. Come, that’s your sort! Everything was difficult before it was easy”—and, thus encouraged, he would soon master his exercise or his task.

Remarkable also was the influence of the *Gardoer* over the other servants of the family, and all those who were employed about her mistress’s house, in

training them to habits of industry, economy, and contentment. Nor was she wanting in the power of giving a gentle reproof. Did she go into the garden on a spring morning, and find the gardener hanging listlessly over his spade, up to him would she go, and in a playful and good-humoured way ask him, "Thomas, I say, could the well be filled with the dew, think you?" and on receiving a reply in the negative, she would add, "Neither will your ground be ready for a crop, if you hain yourself in that way. Delve on, man—delve, pray, and prosper." Or should a tradesman be complaining for want of work, and a decline in the demand for it, to him the *Gardoer* would say, "If your winnings are less, tape them weel, my boy, and be thankful for what work you can get. Better an egg to-day than a chicken to-morrow! Better a laying hen than a standing mill!" And thus would she go on, urging everybody to diligence, frugality, and contentment, and giving forth wise rules, and suggesting a multitude of contrivances in order to promote them. Many a profitable lesson have I learned as to the habits of good management, and the law of little kindnesses, while listening to the words of the *Gardoer*, or in watching and noticing her ways.

The crown of her character, after all, was this : She feared the Lord greatly, and was truly a godly woman. Neatly dressed in her Sabbath attire, with her black chip bonnet, and her snow-white cap with

its crisped border, like a well-conditioned lady in humble life, and unpretending simplicity,—she was always to be seen at church, in the pew behind her mistress. The friend of every one, she had in every one a friend. When getting into the decline of life, and unable, to her own satisfaction, longer to serve the family to whom from her early years she had been a signal blessing, she retired to her native district, in which some of her relations resided, and with what she herself had saved, and a yearly and cheerfully bestowed gift from her former mistress, she passed the latter period of her life in comfort and honour, and in a good old age departed in peace, and in the blessed faith and hope of the Gospel.

AVUS.

[It is pleasant to see the respect paid to the memory of a good and faithful servant, proving the truth of God's Word, "Them that honour me I will honour." A few weeks after the circulation of the above admirable sketch of character, the following paragraph appeared in the *Annan Observer* (1861):—

"We quote the following article from a small penny monthly periodical, printed in Aberdeenshire, called 'The Sunbeam,' and we do so because the subject of the article is an old lady who was not unknown in Annan, and who resided during the closing years of her life in Murray Street with her sister, Mrs. Margaret Morton, relict of John Morton, cotton-spinner. 'Miss Walker,' as she used to be

called; died in March, 1846, at the great age of eighty-eight years. Her sister pre-deceased her by two years, but she continued to reside in the same house, till her decease, with her niece, Miss Jean Morton. Annan, however, has not the honour of being her native place; ~~she~~ was born and reared in the parish of Glencairn, in this county, whence John Morton, her brother, came to Annan in 1804, and worked in the cotton-mill here during the time Mr. Hurst was manager. We find that Miss Walker was considered to be be 'a very nice old lady,' and a serious, good woman, by persons still living in Annan who had opportunities of becoming acquainted with her."]

EVERYTHING IS OF USE.

It is now a great many years since I had a conversation with a fine old sea-captain on the opening up of China and its trade, of which there was at that time some prospect; and in the course of the conversation the remark occurred, that there were many things in the interior of that vast empire which as yet were unknown to us, but which, having by British enterprise been brought home, would also by British ingenuity and industry be turned to a most profitable account. On the other hand, it was observed that the introduction into China of many of our articles of export with which the inhabitants were still unacquainted, would tend greatly to their advantage, adding materially to the civilisation and

bones, the horns and hoofs of oxen and sheep, and with each of a great *omnium gatherum* of other things. Now, having thus collected, analysed, and arranged all this quantity of rubbish and refuse, Bryant found a use, and a profitable use too, for every one of these various articles which had been cast out as utterly worthless. He established an extensive trade for each of them, having its ramifications throughout all England. It was reckoned a most beneficial thing, when planting potato-seed in the ground, that it should be set on a piece of felt or woollen cloth, by which it was considered that its growth was greatly promoted. Taking advantage of this notion, he found a market for a certain class of his articles. By using some pains with his rags of linen cloth, he disposed of these to the paper-makers; for his accumulation of broken metal he found an outlet with the iron and brass founders; many a good horn spoon was fabricated from part of the contents of his *depôt*, and the value of bones as a manure was even then beginning to be known—an article which now, for the same purpose, is in such general use, and it is imported into this country in very considerable quantities. Gradually and laboriously Bryant extended his trade, and at last retired with a considerable fortune. Many years subsequent to the time when I first saw him with his wheelbarrow in the court, happening to be in London, I made inquiry about him, and found that he was then an elderly

man driving about the streets in his own carriage! And so you see that everything is of use, and may be turned to account. There is nothing scarcely that should be reckoned utterly worthless, and a thousand things might be turned to some good purpose that are every hour thoughtlessly thrown away."

"And not only so," the Captain continued, "but there are a great many other things of which we never think, that by a little care and pains may be picked up and turned to a profitable account, and a valuable use. For example," he added, "I recollect observing in London a set of men in the great thoroughfares, such as Cheapside, or Fleet-street, who were to be seen poking between the stones of the causeway with a bit of crooked wire, or a kind of hook, and picking out dexterously all the pieces of horseshoes or nails that had been broken off and left in the crevices; these they gathered up, and when they had obtained a quantity of them, sold them for no mean consideration—iron of this description being reckoned peculiarly valuable from its being welded under the horse's hoof, and much in demand for gun-locks, and harpoons, and other purposes where the hardest iron is required."

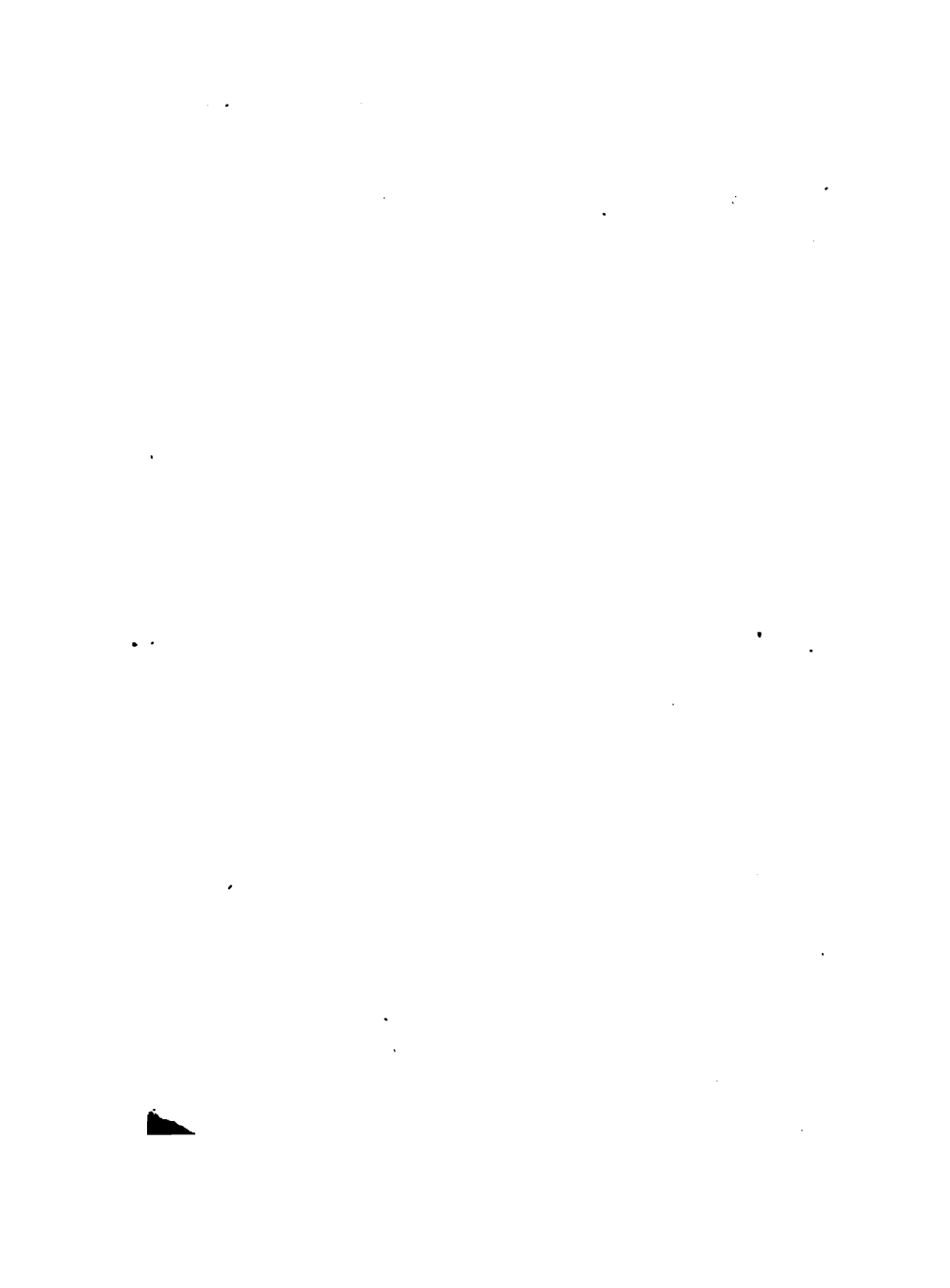
Such are some illustrations of the very plain and practical maxim that "Every thing is of use;" of which examples might be multiplied without number, and the truth of which each of us, every day of our



life, may put to the test ; imitating, in this respect, Him, who, though Lord of creation, commanded his disciples, after feeding the hungry multitude, to “gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.”

AVUS.





XI.

WHY should our garments, made to hide
Our parents' shame, provoke our pride ?
The art of dress did ne'er begin
Till Eve, our mother, learnt to sin.

The tulip and the butterfly
Appear in gayer coats than I ;
Let me be drest fine as I will,
Flies, worms, and flowers exceed me still.

Then will I set my heart to find
Inward adornings of the mind ;
Knowledge and virtue, truth and grace :
These are the robes of richest dress.

They never fade, they ne'er grow old,
Nor fear the rain, nor moth nor mould ;
They take no spot, but still refine,
The more they're worn, the more they shine.

WATTS.

XI.

DRESS.

"I will that women adorn themselves in modest apparel."—
1 Tim. ii. 8, 9.

"Take no thought for the body what ye shall put on."—Luke
xii. 22.

A GENTLEMAN said to me one day, "I wish you would write something about the absurd way in which young servants and other working girls dress now-a-days. What a waste of their wages it must be! And as to difference of station, ladies will soon need to wear serge and calico if they don't want to be imitated." His words made me think long and painfully about this rapidly increasing symptom of so much that is wrong in the moral and spiritual health of our young girls. Let us look at the subject of fine dress in three aspects. 1st. Its wastefulness. 2nd. Its unbecomingness. 3rd. Its dangers.

1st. *Its wastefulness.* It is a pleasant thing to earn money. How much pleasanter than to receive it as a gift, or even as an inheritance! This pleasure is not confined to those denominated the "working classes." Medical men, authors, lawyers, engineers, and all who earn money, whether by brains or fingers, will testify to the delight which they felt when they first received

the result of their own labour, a delight quite independent of, and far superior to, the mere value of the money earned. The appointment of wages for work—of reward for labour—is of the Lord, and that it is under His gracious and tender supervision we find from many beautiful passages in His Word. “The wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night unto the morning.” “Woe unto him that useth his neighbour’s service without wages, and giveth him not for his work.” “He that gathereth by labour shall increase.” When Our Lord spoke of his spiritual workers thus: “The labourer is worthy of his hire,” He, doubtless, took the illustration from the diligent working man or woman, whom His observant eye and tender heart had noted as worthy of recompense. Nay, more—with reverence be it spoken—He who laboured in the carpenter’s shop—Himself the reputed son of a tradesman—knew from personal experience, and hallowed afresh the ordinance of reward for the labour of the hands. “If any man will not work, neither shall he eat.” Is it not, then, a solemn thing to *earn* money; ought it not to be a subject of earnest and prayerful thought what we should do with our earnings? My dear young friends, you have three things, at least, to do with your money; you have to help yourselves, to help your parents, and to help God. Every young woman ought to purchase for herself neat and sufficient underclothing, good shoes, a dark cloak and plaid

shawl, a warm winter dress, and neatly made summer print ones, besides a working dress in which she need not be ashamed to be seen. Every young woman ought to take pleasure in helping those who have helped her all the days of her life. What a pleasure to assist the aged or toiling parents to get the new coat, or wincey dress, or packet of good tea, or blankets, or coals for wintry weather! So, also, ought every young woman, in common with all who receive God's gifts, to give back a portion to help on His cause on the earth. True, He needs it not, for the silver and the gold are His; but you need it. Always to take and never to give is as bad for the souls of those who receive £10. a year as for those who have as many thousands. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver." "He who giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord." It is good, then, to have your mite ready for the mission box, for the poorer neighbour, for the beggar at the door. But you shake your head mournfully—the purse is empty—you have nothing to give—neither can you help your parents—while your under garments are tattered and scanty, and your every-day dress not fit to be seen. What have you to show for your money? Plenty of coarse "gum flowers," cheap ribbons, draggled feathers cotton lace, a flounced silk gown, trimmings, and crinolines! Every one knows how these articles, cheap and bad as they may be, yet needing constant

renewing, swell the pages of an account, which, when ready money fails, shopkeepers are always willing to open ; so that it is far from unlikely that with your empty purse you have likewise some long unpaid bills. Taken by itself, and to be paid for at a distant time, each article seems within the reach, and you forget to compare it and the whole with your yearly income. This miserable plan of running scores for dress is now becoming so universal in large towns that it may be said to be turned into a gigantic demoralising system. Working upon the vanity of young girls, even respectable shopkeepers in Glasgow, and, I believe, in Edinburgh, succeed in getting them to take articles far above their means by the plausible arrangement of paying a certain sum every month till the debt is completed. The temptations thus held out to extravagance, to dishonesty, to even worse methods of getting out of almost hopeless debt are appalling to think of. A case of the determination of shopkeepers to get young girls into their debt occurred lately in a small town in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh. A young servant went to buy a shawl—all that she liked were beyond her means, and she declined purchasing any. The shopkeeper insisted on her taking one and paying him by-and-bye. She resisted the temptation, but foolishly yielded to his almost forced offer of sending the shawls home for her “to think about.” Her mistress, in whom she had the happiness of being able to confide, and the

wisdom to avail herself of it, showed her the folly and danger of the proceeding, and the shawls were returned. The shopkeeper was so indignant that he wished still to force the sale, as the goods had, he said, been ordered upon that understanding, and it required a strong representation from the mistress ere the matter was allowed to drop. One of the evils of this system is, that as it is not conducted with ready money in the hand, the young purchaser is apt to forget *proportions* in her ideas of expenditure. As an example of this want of proportion, I may mention that, among other articles of useless dress, parasols are frequently bought by girls who are *only* afraid of the sun *upon Sundays*; they cost, perhaps, five shillings, which, out of wages of £6 a year, is in the same proportion as if a lady having £600 a year were to pay £25 for a parasol!!

2nd. *Its unbecomingness.* There must of course be some object in the trouble bestowed upon getting together those articles before mentioned—in foregoing the natural and healthy pleasures of giving to the poor, helping those you love, possessing comfortable and respectable attire, and laying up something in the Savings Bank. This object is, I may venture to say, in every case, the desire of improving your appearance—of being attractive in the eyes of the young men of your acquaintance, and looking better than the young women. Nothing can be a greater delusion. It is only the foolish young men, whose attentions are

not worth having, who admire your tawdry clothes. Steady, respectable workmen will say, "Susan and Margaret, with their fine flounces, their absurd gauze and ribbon streamers instead of bonnets, their ridiculous bumps of horse-hair at the back of their heads, may do very well to flirt with, but those girls, so plainly and properly dressed that one never knows what they wear, will make the only wives worth having." Then as to the admiration of ladies and gentlemen, do you know what they say when they see an overdressed young girl? "Oh! how vulgar she looks!" and so she does, for vulgarity consists in trying to be, or appear something which we are not. Or when they see a young woman in neat, plain attire, "What a nice, quiet looking girl—quite lady-like!" and so she is, for a lady keeps to her own station, and you are acting like a lady when you keep to yours. It would be well if you would bear in mind that nothing is becoming that is unsuitable. The swan, so stately and glorious in its white robes, would look a "fright" if it stuck on the tail of the peacock, which again is beautiful on its rightful owner. The cow so dignified and shapely as God made her, would excite nothing but ridicule if she attempted to fly in the air, or swim in the water—or if she coveted the sunbonnet, or shoes of her milker. A practical writer, who signs herself "An Old Housekeeper," says thus:—"I often tell girls that dress will not make them ladies; but being truthful, straight-

forward, and honest, never doing a mean or dishonourable action, is what will make the poorest man or woman a lady or gentleman in the true sense of the word; and I often finish off by saying I would not consider our own good Queen a lady if she acted otherwise."

There is a fable by Hans Andersen, the Swedish writer, which well illustrates the particular beauty which attaches to the right station and right place. It is called the "Ugly Duck." A poor little duckling came out of its egg in a farmyard, so perfectly hideous that it was the laughingstock of everybody. The dogs barked at it, the children stoned it, and the poultry woman ridiculed it. Weary at last of this hard life, the little duck determined to seek her fortune elsewhere, and set off from the farmyard in quest of a happier home. But the same ill fortune pursued her—everywhere she was laughed at and persecuted. One day she was waddling along in her peculiar and very ugly fashion, when she came to a shining lake in the midst of beautiful pleasure-grounds. Sailing on the water were graceful creatures with snow-white wings and long arched necks, which, instead of laughing like the rest of the world, seemed to invite the poor little wanderer to join them in their happy home. Surprised and agitated with new hopes, and forgetting the ugliness which had made her life miserable, she ventured near—she plunged in—she saw herself in the mirror of the waters a beautiful little swan! The egg had


got by mistake into the duck's nest, and what was ugly and ridiculous in a supposed duckling was only to be admired when she attained her proper place and her right element. Let us never forget that STATION—with its differences, its peculiar gifts, advantages, and beauties—is a gift and ordinance of God. As there can be no beauty in natural disposition, in moral character, or in Christian profession without CONSISTENCY, so neither can there be any external beauty of dress, or adornment, without that precious quality, found in perfection in all the unfallen works of God's hands. What is right for one station, is unseemly in another; what is proper and becoming for one person, is altogether evil and inconsistent in another; therefore God hath said, "Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have."

3rd. *Its dangers.* The Bible describes the sinful and improvident thus: "He that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes." You don't do this, but the question is, are you not doing worse? Surely it would be a far wiser thing to let your money fall among the tangled grass, or rust among the waters of a pool, than to throw it away on finery, of which it would be well indeed if wastefulness and unbecomingness were the only evil results. Listen and tremble. These are the words of the Governor of a PRISON: "I could give numberless instances of the baneful effects resulting from an

inordinate love of dress among the young females consigned to the many prisons in and about London, and from an experience of twenty years and upwards, my conviction is that the increasing number of young females who early fall into crime from this too apparent cause, is nearly in the same proportion as those of the opposite sex who yield to the influence of strong drink." Do not put this away as an impossibility for YOU. Wherever a passion for any one worldly thing enters a mind, that person is safe from no amount or degree of evil. It is like the acorn to the oak—it is like the small opening in a flood-gate.

In Eastern countries it was the custom to lay up costly garments in a treasury, not to be worn except upon state occasions, but forming a store of wealth. Our girls do not, and could not, do anything exactly like this; but they do what is far less wise. They buy dress that is beyond their means, to be worn on high-days and holidays (including the sweet solemn Sunday, alas!), and then the rest of the week they can only afford tattered, underclothing and slovenly outer raiment. Less money spent, and more care taken, too, would enable young girls to look and to be always thoroughly well dressed.

"Care is a good economist in a wardrobe; it will save the nine stitches by putting the one that is needed; and by folding, and brushing, and putting away, will make clothes look neat and respectable twice as long as they otherwise would. A careful



person will also find it worth while to change the clothing according to their employment."

Nothing is more foolish and extravagant than for young girls to be striving to be "in the fashion." This often causes them to make unnecessary purchases, and to wear articles that if they could only see themselves as others do, they would acknowledge to be quite unbecoming, making them look far less pleasing than God created them. Indeed, the blinding power of FASHION in all classes is very strange to see; and it is met with in all countries. Do you know what a Pelele is? I dare say not, so I shall endeavour to describe it to you. It is the custom in a certain tribe of African savages to pierce the upper lip of the girls close to the nose, and to keep the hole open with a small pin, which is taken out after a time, and larger ones successively pressed in. After some years the size of the hole is so great that a wooden, tin, or ivory ring of two inches in diameter, and sometimes larger, can be put in. The lip then sticks out over the mouth, and many words cannot be properly pronounced. After a time, when the unfortunate wearer gets older, the ring and lip are dragged up over the nose by the action of the muscles, especially when she attempts to smile. To meet this emergency, the teeth, which are then completely shown, are carefully chipped to look like those of a cat or crocodile! When told it is ugly, they answer, "It is the fashion." When asked why it is the fashion,

they answer, "For beauty, to be sure. What kind of a creature would a woman be without the Pelele!!"

I would say, in conclusion, if you are of those who know what prayer is, remember to pray about your clothing! Do not be ashamed to tell the Lord what you want, and to ask wisdom to do His will in this as in all things. By many tender little touches in the Scriptures of all Truth, we know that He delights in having all things, even this very subject, brought to Him in prayer. "Make ALL your requests known" —"Cast ALL your care upon me," saith He; and, again, "Take no anxious thought, saying 'Where-with shall we be clothed' . . . For your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. . . . And all these things shall be added unto you." And again, for the restoration of the pledged raiment, "It shall come to pass when he crieth unto me, that I will hear, for I am gracious."

XII.

“DAYS of my youth—ye have glided away,
Hairs of my youth—ye are frosted and grey ;
Eyes of my youth—your keen sight is no more,
Cheeks of my youth—ye are furrow'd all o'er ;
Strength of my youth—all your vigour is gone,
Thoughts of my youth—your gay visions are flown.

Days of my youth—I wish not your recall,
Hairs of my youth—I'm content you should fall ;
Eyes of my youth—ye much evil have seen,
Cheeks of my youth—bath'd in tears have ye been ;
Thoughts of my youth—ye have led me astray,
Strength of my youth—why lament your decay ?

Days of my age—ye will shortly be past,
Pains of my age—yet awhile can ye last ;
Joys of my age—in true wisdom delight,
Eyes of my age—be religion your light ;
Thoughts of my age—dread ye not the cold sod,
Hopes of my age—be ye fixed on your God.”

By the HON. ST. GEORGE TUCKER, of Virginia.



XII.

AGED WOMEN.

“The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things that they may teach the young women.”—Titus ii., 3, 4.

“Mine eyes do fail with tears for the destruction of the daughters of my people.”—Lam. ii., 11.

A LITTLE boy was once taken to see the Queen, in the course of one of her journies—but he would not believe that she was the Queen, because she had no crown on! Now there are older people throughout the land, who though quite aware that Queens are not “state statues,” decked every day with crown, orb, and sceptre, as in the picture books, yet who do not fully realise that our Queen (God bless her!) is the centre of a home and household, like many of ourselves; full, too, of warm interest in all that concerns the social and domestic welfare of her people. I have spoken to you already of a sin, familiar, alas! in Great Britain, and, woe is me! so prevalent in some fair wide counties that their statistics bring us into open shame. This sad fact found its way to Royal ears. The Queen expressed her deep sorrow and mortification to one in her confidence, and gave the following anecdote as a proof how lightly that

awful sin was held in account amongst those, themselves apparently respectable, and outwardly moral. Being in the habit of making acquaintance with her poorer neighbours, the Queen had taken great pleasure in visiting a nice respectable old woman. Upon one occasion, the Princess Alice being with her, Her Majesty noticed the presence of a little child in the cottage whom she had never seen there before. In answer to her inquiries, the old woman told her that it was her daughter's child. A kindly question followed about the daughter's "husband." The Queen described her pain and confusion when the cool and unmoved rejoinder came without blush or tear, "Oh! she's no' married."—"And before the Princess Alice too!" was the Queen's touching comment, true to *her* motherly instincts, which seemed so blunted in the aged woman. Two things occur to me as worth thinking about, suggested by this anecdote. If it were painful that the avowal of a child's guilt, without sorrow or confusion of face, should be made before the young Princess, oh! how much worse—how infinitely more dangerous are similar avowals, careless remarks, jesting allusions, and gossiping details made before the young children of cottage homes, girls and boys, by mothers, grandmothers, elderly relatives, and neighbours! A Princess of the land, or the young ladies of hall and castle, fenced round by proprieties and customs of life, by good precepts and bright examples, might hear such

things in much ignorance, and with little injury save a shudder of disgust, and a passing wonder how such things could be. Far otherwise is it, however, with those exposed to temptations at every turn, and sent early into the world unprotected by parents' care; a light word—a careless laugh—an improper story, oh, how Satan may make use of these to weaken and destroy in their hearts the love of virtue, and the hatred of vice! Yet surely cottage maidens, “body, soul, and spirit,” are as precious in God's sight, and as carefully to be guarded from sin, as princess or earl's daughter. The same Saviour died upon the cross to justify, to sanctify, to preserve “blameless” both the one and the other. The second thought suggested by the story is the vast influence of elderly women. Seated by their “ingle nook,” they think, perhaps, that their day of labour has passed away—that there is nothing left for them to do but to die—a great work indeed; none greater, but, thank God, none simpler, through the blood and righteousness of the Lord the Saviour. That very preparation, however, ought to involve a great and a much-needed work for others. “Without holiness none shall see the Lord,” and as the aged woman sits at home, applying to her soul the precious cleansing Blood, and rejoicing in the spotless Robe provided for her, oh! how the love and the appreciation of the Saviour's Holiness ought to make her seek, yea *agonise* for the Holy Spirit to deepen

her abhorrence of all uncleanness, her sorrow for her own past sinfulness, and light views of sin, and to make her grow in purity and likeness to her Lord. Prayerful and successful attempts to pull others out of the fire, teaching them to hate even the garments spotted by the flesh, would as surely follow as the stem springs up from the root, as the root is formed from the seed. It is not many women who can say, as a famed mother in Israel (Elizabeth Fry) said on her deathbed, when not far from the limit of three score years and ten, "Since my heart was touched at seventeen years old, I believe I never have awakened from sleep, in sickness or in health, by day or by night, without my first waking thought being how best I might serve the Lord." But strong in the strength given by the Strong, there is not one of you aged ones, if the Lord's, who cannot resolve *now* to serve him openly day by day—and how better than by throwing your vast influence into the scale against Satan, instead of even passively working for him! Many are wondering how it is that crime is ceasing to be crime in social estimation—how the birth of an illegitimate child is considered not as disgrace but as "misfortune," and therefore how that awful first downward step taken in the beautiful, happy, innocent-looking country is becoming so frequent as to cause the hideous increase of the woes and crimes of our large towns. But it is little to be wondered at, and it will never be amended till the aged amongst us learn

to look at it in the light of God's law, God's holiness, and God's eternity, and to treat it accordingly. Who so fit as yourselves to speak words of warning, kindly reproof, gentle counsel to the young men around you, which younger women might shrink from uttering? Who so fit to speak out of hearts old in years but young in memory and sympathy, to the young girls under your own and your neighbour's roof? "Standing barefoot on the Rock of Ages," as was said by one nearing as you are doing the great tides of Eternity, who so fit to help others to reach that safe, blessed standing-place? With far greater leisure than in past years to "talk with your Saviour" in your many lonely or sleepless hours, who so fit to bring the lessons thus learned direct from Him, down to the comprehension of the younger and busier ones around you?

How many difficulties, heart-struggles, and victories could you bring out of the stores of your experience, whereby you might strengthen the weak faith, and warn the wayward inclination, and startle the deluded and ignorant? How much good even the naming things by their right names, with all lightness banished from heart, countenance, and tone, would have upon all around. Confession of sin, and conviction about sin, in general, are comparatively easy, but alas! not incompatible with a strange and awful blindness and indifference as to its particular manifestation in life and action. This I have known

fearfully proved by the fall of several who had been subjects, if not of revival grace, at all events of revival conviction and emotion. How well, then, aged women might supplement the necessarily more general work of pastor and preacher, by pointed personal warning of dangers and bye-path temptations, of which those outside the village or the family can have little idea! What useful service, also, might be rendered by aged women in their treatment of those who have already fallen! So prone is human nature to extremes, that when roused to a sense of the great sin of treating evil lightly, it rushes from hatred of the sin to harshness to the sinner. This is not God's will. "Go and sin no more," "Go in peace, thy sins are forgiven thee," are glorious indications of the Lord's treatment of "them that are lost;"—while who need despair of regaining a place in society when Tamar, Rahab, and Bathsheba are "placed among princes," as the ancestresses of the Holy One! These promises are only to the crushed and broken-hearted, however, to those who see the awful evil of their sin, and resolve utterly to loathe and forsake it. Whose bosom then so fit for the poor erring girl to sob out her penitence upon, as that of the aged mother, or grandmother, or the childless widow, whose interest is unselfish and God-hallowed? Whose words would be more effective in pointing to the cleansing blood—than those who have had the sins of a long life blotted out for ever? The companionship,

counsel, and support of an aged woman, would surely be far better for a young fallen one than the mistaken sympathy, the jesting condolences, or the inquisitive gossiping of idle companions; while there would thus be more stability in the promise of reform, and appearance of repentance in the eyes of the many who go to the opposite extreme, and think that once fallen, a sister may be left to tread unheeded in the path to HELL. Thus said once a great thinker :

“ Despise none :

“ Despair of none.

“The Jews would not willingly tread upon the smallest piece of paper in their way, but took it up; for possibly, say they, the name of God may be on it. Trample not on any; there may be some work of grace there, that thou knowest not of. The name of God may be written upon that soul thou treadest on; it may be a soul that Christ thought so much of as to give His precious blood for it; therefore despise it not.”*


In conclusion, though not touching upon the particular topic of this chapter, yet as suitable for our aged friends, we give “ a word for the knitting-pins,” said to be by “ an auld wife,” but really from the pen of “ Avus” :

“A German lady once told me that she had a perfect recollection of seeing her grandmother, the wife of a

* Coleridge's “ Aids to Reflection.”

German Pastor, sitting in her accustomed pew every Sunday, with her eyes, during the sermon, intently fixed on her husband's face, whilst her fingers were busily employed with her knitting. Now, though this is never likely to become the custom in Scotland, yet we seem to be rather in danger of going into the opposite extreme, and neglecting the knitting-pins altogether. Some younglasses that I know of appear to look upon them as belonging to us old wives, and soon to pass away altogether like spinning-wheels. I hope, however, that they will never allow this to be the case ; and I am sure their fathers, brothers, and husbands, when they get them, will much prefer stockings of their knitting, and will find them wear much better, too, than any they can buy. Knitting, too, has the great advantage of allowing you to walk, talk, read, and think, while the work is growing under your fingers ; and how many pleasant and profitable thoughts may be knitted into one stocking, while the mind, perhaps, wanders away into distant lands, which we have heard of but never seen ; or, best of all, to that ' better land ' which is very far off, where some with whom we were ' knit together in love,' have already arrived before us. Reader, have you ever thought of the full meaning of that expression, ' knit together in love ?' Knitting, as you know, is composed of a succession of loops, or links, each supporting the other, and all firmly fastened to the ' foundation,' or first row, and to the ' casting off,' or last row. So Christians are, or ought

to be, linked together by love to each' other, and to Christ, who is the 'Alpha and Omega,' the 'author and finisher' of our faith; and any fracture of love amongst Christians produces as great a rent and blemish as a dropped stitch does in knitting. You may have seen some knitting composed of stripes of different and contrasting colours, but all joined together, and harmonising as a whole. So the Catholic, or Universal Church, composed of all who are truly united to Christ, contains many different sections and denominations, such as Episcopalians and Presbyterians, Lutherans and Calvinists, etc.; but are they all, either as Churches or as individuals, knit together in love? Have not some a very narrow and bigotted preference for their own particular Church, for the colour they have chosen for themselves? and who have no wish to be associated in any way with the rest, quite forgetting that as in the case of the different stripes of knitting, they lose more than half their beauty and usefulness by not being knit together; or, to drop this homely simile, members of Christ forget that in Heaven the only denomination known of will be that of Christians, and that there will be but one glorious temple, where all the worshippers will be for ever 'knit together in love.'



XIII.

"COURAGE, brother! do not stumble,
Though thy path is dark as night;
There's a star to guide the humble—
'Trust in God and do the right.'

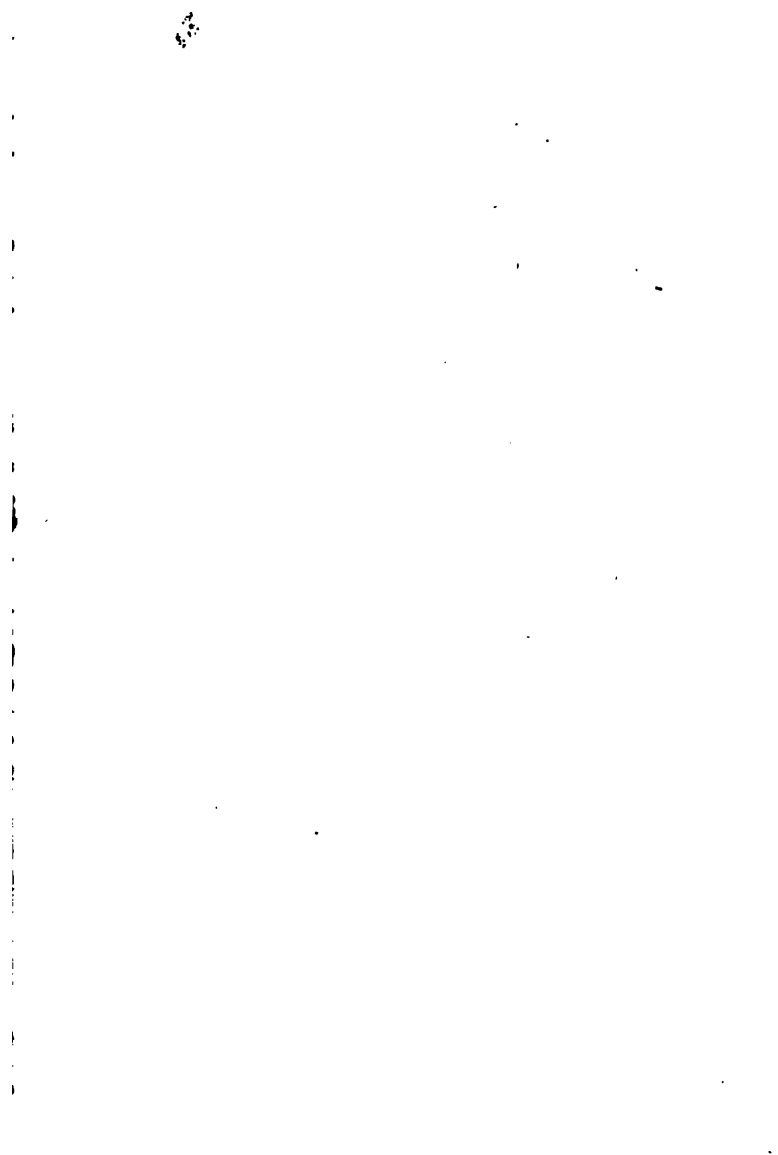
Let the road be long and dreary,
And its ending out of sight,
Foot it bravely—strong or weary,
'Trust in God and do the right.'

Trust no forms of guilty passion,
Friends can look like angels bright;
Trust no custom, school, or fashion,
'Trust in God and do the right.'

Some will hate thee, some will love thee,
Some will flatter, some will slight;
Cease from man, and look above thee—
'Trust in God and do the right.'

Simple rule and safest guiding,
Inward peace and inward light;
Star upon our path abiding—
'Trust in God and do the right.' "

ANON.



XIII.

MEN.

"Husbands, love your wives."—Ephes. v. 25.

"Her husband praiseth her."—Prov. xxxi. 28.

"PRAISE your wife, man ; for pity's sake give a little encouragement—it won't hurt her, nor will it harm you. She has made your home comfortable, your hearth bright and shining, and your food tasty ; for pity's sake, tell her you thank her, if nothing more. She don't expect it ; it will make her eyes open wider than they have done for some years ; but it will do her good for all that, and you too. There are many women to-day thirsting for the word of praise, the language of encouragement. Through summer's heat and winter's cold they have toiled on ; and so accustomed have their fathers, brothers, and husbands become to their monotonous labours, that they look for and upon them as they do the daily rising and setting of the sun. Homely every-day life may be made beautiful by the appreciation of its homeliness. You know if you can take a clean shirt from your drawer whenever you want it, somebody's fingers have ached in the toil of making it so fresh and agreeable. Everything that pleases the eye and the sense has been produced by constant work, much

thought, great care, and untiring efforts. If the so-styled 'lords' would only consider these things, and show some little gratitude for the numberless attentions bestowed upon them in sickness and in health, they would not seem so selfish in their feelings. They don't come out with a hearty, 'Why, how pleasant you make things look, wife! I am obliged to you for taking so much pains.' They thank everybody out of doors, because it is customary, then come home, tip their chairs back, and cross their legs; pull out the newspaper, grumble if wife asks them to take the baby, scold if the fire isn't bright; or, even if everything is just right, shut their mouths with a smack of satisfaction, but never say to her 'I thank you.' I tell you what, men, young and old, if you did but show an ordinary civility towards your wives; if you did but give the hundred-and-sixtieth part of the compliments you almost choked them with before you were married; if you would cease to dilate upon their faults, however banteringly, before others, fewer women would seek for other sources of happiness than your cold and ungrateful affection."

So says an American author, and if husbands were to act upon this very simple advice, it would be far less difficult for wives to have and to make happy homes. Men and women are very differently constituted. Women have a gift which is not generally bestowed upon men; they can place themselves, so to speak, in the position of another, and thus under-

stand feelings and character which does not properly belong to themselves, while men may live long lives without in the least understanding the hearts and temperaments of those with whom they live. One point of feminine character which few men perceive, is, how very easily a woman is made happy by little things which would not have the smallest effect upon a masculine mind. An act of consideration, a look of kindness, a word of pity, would help many a weary wife through a hard day's work with very little cost of trouble to the husbands. The Bible, with its wonderful power of discrimination, has marked the difference between the two minds. Women are nowhere commanded to love their husbands, because few home faults proceed from that cause in the softer, more loving texture of women's hearts. The Spirit of All Wisdom, however, seeing the harder, less loving natures of the sterner sex, and foreseeing the many loveless and miserable homes which would arise in all coming times, provides for it by addressing the solemn command to Christian men, "Husbands, love your wives," adding also a significant hint of their natural temperaments, "and be not bitter against them." Again, as if foreseeing also that, even where real love existed, its good effects may be marred by being kept for great occasions under lock and key, and that the good soft kernel may be rendered nearly useless by a hard and inaccessible shell, the Spirit gives utterance to a word

which implies the tenderest care and pity. If you read attentively Ephes. v. 25—35, you will find there the word “cherish,” just what is needed by the poor tender hearts and delicate frames of many a wife and mother of British cottage homes. You will see, moreover, that it is not any great stretch of kindness, after all, that is required, simply this, that “every one of you in particular so love his wife *even as himself*.”

“A correspondent gives us this experience: ‘I am one of those whose lot in life has been to go out into an unfriendly world at an early age; and of twenty families in which I made my home in the course of about nine years, there were only three or four that could properly be designated *happy* families, and the source of trouble was not so much the *lack* of love, as the lack of care to *manifest* it.’ The closing words of this sentence give us the fruitful source of family alienations—of heart-aches innumerable—of sad faces, and gloomy home-circles. ‘Not so much the *lack* of love, as lack of care to *manifest* it.’ What a world of misery is suggested by this brief remark! Not over three or four happy homes in twenty, and the cause so manifest, and so easily remedied! Ah! in the small sweet courtesies of life, what power resides! In a word, a look, a tone, how much of happiness or disquietude may be communicated! Think of it, reader, and take the *lesson home* with you.”*

* From the “Montreal Witness.”

A very common source of misery in the married homes of workmen is bad temper on the part of the husbands. Wives get so many admonitions in every book and lecture upon the regulation of their tempers, and upon making home happy, and I have already said so much on that subject myself, that I am glad to put the husbands in mind that, after all, there are faults on both sides. Temper is a upas tree wherever it is found, destroying happiness and producing misery as far as its branches reach ; but nowhere are its results so frightful as in married life. There it is a heavy chain, and makes home a dungeon. Did you ever hear what the mother of a well-known hero said of him when she heard that he was taken prisoner in India and chained to another fellow-sufferer ? “God help him that’s chained to oor Davie !” Well, now the next time you are going to lose your temper, think whether this may not be the case with your once fondly-loved Mary or Jeannie, whom you fully intended to make a happy woman, and not a chained slave. There was an honest working-man who was truly converted to the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. His old companions were scoffing at him one day, and declared that they did not believe he had been “changed.” “Ask my wife !” were his three emphatic words of answer.

I will conclude this part of my chapter with an anecdote which will do for husbands and wives alike. A bridegroom, who was rather odd in his ways,

requested his bride to accompany him into the garden a day or two after the wedding. He then threw a line over the roof of their cottage. Giving his wife one end of it, he went to the other side, and called out, "Pull the line!" She pulled it, at his request, as far as she could. He cried, "Pull it over!" "I can't," she replied. "Pull with all your might!" shouted the husband. But vain were all the efforts of the bride to pull over the line, so long as the husband held on to the opposite end. But when he came round, and they both pulled at one end, it came over with great ease. "There," said he, as the line fell from the roof, "you see it was hard work and useless when we pulled against each other; but it is easy and pleasant when we both pull together. If we oppose each other, it will be hard work; if we act together, it will be pleasant to live. Let us, therefore, always pull together."

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word."—Psalm 119. 9.

Husbands generally expect their wives to act in their daily lives and difficulties as if they were pieces of perfection, and lose temper, patience, and love when they find their expectations disappointed. It would be a great deal wiser if before marriage they were a little more particular in their choice. If young men chose their wives from some better reasons than red cheeks, and bright eyes, and smart dressing, and

grounded their acquaintance on something better than foolish jesting and improper romping, they would not indeed find perfection, but they would have a greater hope of finding that "good thing," a good wife. That was excellent advice, "*Strike* for wives who can cook your dinner and sew on your buttons, and never give up till you get them." Or better still, strike for wives who, with some knowledge or wish to learn these homely ways, unite some sterling principles of right and wrong. A great many of the faults of our young women are owing to the foolishness, to use the mildest term, of our young men. If a few of the more intelligent and respectable of the young bachelors of any village or district were steadfastly to set their faces against the follies of their circle, there would be more good done than by much talking and preaching. Intelligent men, for instance,—those who can read and write and think, and who do not take from themselves the power of thinking by strong drink,—know quite well that the way in which girls dress nowadays is ugly, unbecoming, and most extravagant. Yet it is done to please *them*, and pleased and admiring they appear to be. Again, if they think at all, they know that the dancing classes which are so prevalent are the worst of all places for modest women, and their future wives. I utterly disapprove of balls and dancing in any class, but there is no doubt that as these things are managed amongst the higher classes the same amount of evil cannot take place. Our young

ladies never go to such places without a careful married friend to look after them. Why, then, are our young cottage girls to be thought less valuable, and treated as if it did not signify what became of them? There is much talk now about the rights of the people—ah! if our young men would but set the example of using the undoubted rights and influence they possess! Then would each future wife and mother of the working classes be as carefully kept from evil, and treated as respectfully as if they were our tenderly brought up but not more valuable young ladies.

“A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.”—Prov. xvii. 22.

“There is a time to laugh.”—Eccles. iii. 4.

“It is good to be merry and wise,” says an old proverb. “He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast,” says an older and better proverb still. God made us with certain gifts and capacities for enjoying amusement, and for being merry, which He does not give to the inferior creatures. Men can laugh, which no beast can—the hyæna, even, only being able to produce a ghastly grin. The Bible guards this gift of laughter, which so easily goes down to madness and folly, by providing that while it cheers earth, it is not to interfere with Heaven. We should at once be able to go from laughter to higher and better things. So the Bible says, “Is any merry, let him sing psalms.” The children of Israel combined these rare gifts when “they went

away into their tents glad and merry in heart for the goodness which the Lord had shewn unto David and to Solomon, and to Israel His people."

It is strange that in Great Britain amusement seems a more doleful and miserable thing than anywhere else. In other countries, even where they don't know much of the higher union of mirth and seriousness of which we have been speaking, they seem able to laugh and be merry with free hearts. Once in travelling through France I came to an inn in a village where there was a fête—that is, a holiday. I was very tired and sleepy, and did not feel so much amused as my neighbours. It was the first French holiday I had seen, however, and I could not help noticing the order, propriety, as well as light-heartedness of the people. They seemed to enjoy themselves as much as if they were a set of playful innocent children. I could not help remembering what a French historian wrote a great many years ago of the inhabitants of Great Britain when he paid a visit to England, which it was not so common for French people to do in those days as in these. "Ils amusent tristement," said the historian; that is to say, "They amuse themselves dolefully." In looking round on that pretty French village, with its happy groups of bright-looking peasants, I could not see a whisky bottle or a tipsy person. The same sort of holiday in a Scotch or English village would have been a very dreary affair—staggering men, and even

flushed and confused-looking women—nay, God help us, as I have seen it, young intoxicated boys, not to speak of scores of whisky bottles, would have been part and parcel of the whole proceeding. Ah yes! I believe it is that hideous black receptacle with its “fire-water” which prevents our working men and their families from knowing anything of true amusement. How can a poor wife “amuse herself” anything but “dolefully” when she knows that her husband’s home-coming, which ought to be a time of happiness, is but to bring the frown or the blow? How little real happiness of childhood can those children know who never see the pleasant smile or hear the happy laughter of a respectable God-fearing father, but who only experience a mirth like that of a maniac, and a smile like that of the grinning hyæna! Nay, how can a man who deals with the bottle know anything himself of healthy amusement? A walk in a Scotch town on New Year’s night, or through an English “statute fair,” shows one vividly how cruel are the tender mercies of Satan, and how “dolefully” he allows his victims “to amuse themselves.” Besides, it requires a comfortable body and a healthy brain for true amusement. “Hyrti, a celebrated anatomist, used to say that he could distinguish in the darkest room, by one stroke of the scalpel, the brain of the inebriate from that of the person who had lived soberly. Now and then he would congratulate his class upon the possession of a drunkard’s brain,

admirably fitted, from its hardness and more complete preservation, for the purpose of demonstration. When the anatomist wishes to preserve a human brain for any length of time, he effects his object by keeping that organ in a vessel of alcohol. From a soft, pulpy substance, it then becomes comparatively hard ; but the inebriate, anticipating the anatomist, begins the indurating process before death—begins it while the brain remains the consecrated temple of the soul—while its delicate and gossamer tissues still throb with the pulse of heaven-born light. Strange infatuation, thus to desecrate the godlike ! Terrible enchantment that dries up all the fountains of generous feeling petrifies all the tender humanities and sweet charities of life, leaving only the brain of lead, and a heart of stone !”

How can a man enjoy life while he is preparing his brains for the surgeon’s knife !

A gentleman who made a great many experiments with a very powerful microscope, told me that in the flesh and muscles of those—and of those alone—who die of delirium tremens, especially when accompanied by long emaciation, are found millions of white spots, in each of which is a little bag containing a living creature !

The mind that inhabited that uncomfortable body while still alive could know nothing whatever of genuine amusement. It is not only these advanced stages of vice and intoxication, however, which make


men unhappy and "unamusable." Many men are made morose and disagreeable, and sources of misery to themselves and others, by a small amount of whisky, comparatively speaking. Alcohol is, in itself, a poison, and when taken constantly, even in what may be thought small quantities, destroys the digestion, and produces a loathing of solid food. Whenever a working man cannot eat his dinner, you may be sure he is not an easily amused man. Here is the testimony of a wife on this subject:—

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Nicol, "what a thing it used to be to prepare a meal for my husband! It was quite a puzzle what to do sometimes, he was so fiekie. When I'd cook something very tasty for his breakfast, there was no knowing if he would touch it or not. The very sight of food used to turn his stomach. Now that he has joined the Teetotal Society, he can eat anything. You would not credit it was the same man. He's got back to the taste of a child. He will come in to breakfast, and take his buttermilk and bread with as much relish as either of his children. It goes down so sweet, and it does one good to see how he enjoys his food. He don't care what it is; he is ready for anything, and it makes our meals so happy; he is so cheerful now; no grumbling, as it used to be when he was drinking."

What is or OUGHT to be amusement? Its best and highest meaning is relaxation; that is

like the unbending of a bow after it has been long strung. Almost any change of employment produces pleasant relaxation when the mind and the body are in perfect health. Listening to the prattle and promoting the simple pleasures of his children would be of itself real amusement to a healthy working man. The walk in the fields with wife and children—the pleasant volume obtained from the many libraries for working men, read aloud while the wife stitches and darns, is a source of pure and true relaxation. There are also innocent games and employments which are now much recommended for working men—music, chess, and the like. Of these I shall only say two things. Never play at any game upon which you cannot ask God's blessing, which I do not think you can do upon anything that approaches to gambling. And as much as possible let all your amusements be such as your wives can either join in, or give hearty interest and sympathy.

There is a great talk in these days about the need of amusement, but, after all, who is it that has time to be rightly amused? Surely not those who have not yet made their peace with God. Those who have a sword hanging over their heads can scarcely be justified in wasting any time which ought to be spent in fleeing from the wrath to come, and in making sure of their interest in the great salvation provided for them. Those who are thus safe and blessed for ever are the easiest to be amused, because they



are the only truly happy beings in God's human creation.

"A workman that needeth not to be ashamed."—2 Tim. ii. 15.

What a grand body of men are our British workmen! With all their faults, they are the nerves and the sinews of our grand ancient land. Not perfectly strung, however, are our nerves; not so strong as might be possible are these our sinews, and our workmen's foes sometimes make them "ashamed." The fact is that if each individual workman were to put his own internal foes to flight, there would be a marvellously small frontage of other sort of enemies to fight. If each man were to exercise his "rights," proper and personal, of living a godly, sober, and religious life, his "wrongs" would somehow vanish in a mysterious manner. One of the best of our writers on that much-vexed question, "working men and their difficulties," writes thus: "It is often easier to earn money than to know how to spend it. The latter requires a degree of intelligence of a higher order than is needed to roll rails, to hammer iron, to watch a spinning frame, or to mend broken threads. Wise economy is not a natural instinct, but the growth of reflection, and often the product of experience. Prodigality is much more natural to man. Thus the savage is the greatest spendthrift, for he has no forethought, no to-morrow, and lives only for the

day or the hour. Hence the clever workman, unless he be trained in good habits, may exhibit no higher a life than the mere animal; and the earning of increased wages will only furnish such persons with increased means of indulging in the gratification of the grosser appetites. In a time of prosperity they feast, and in a time of adversity they "clem." Their earnings, to use their own phrase in some districts, "come in at the spigot, and go out at the bung-hole." We recommend, therefore, that all the attention and energy hitherto directed towards increasing the wages, should now be expended upon the better management of what is already obtained. Sometimes we hear men spoken of as leaders of "strikes." Strange tales reach our ears of their undaunted determination, and their untiring zeal: they will contend to the death, but not give in. Now these are just the men we want to stand in the front ranks of the battle that must be fought with drunkenness, prodigality, profanity, and sensuality. These deadly foes have long trodden down the finest race of workmen in the world; it is time that some of your brave men, with all their boasted courage, should turn upon their enemies, who are not merely threatening to advance, but have advanced, and, in how many cases, have taken full possession of those hearths and homes which our volunteers are talking of defending. Oh, believe us, no foreign foe is half so much to be dreaded, nor ever can do us half the injury, which these foes can effect. Against them

we would gladly enlist every working man in the kingdom.”*

There is an old proverb which says, “He that teacheth not his son a trade, is as if he taught his son to be a thief;” and the converse ought to be equally the case—He that teacheth his son a trade is as if he taught his son to be an honest and valuable member of society. Work is in itself so rational, so ennobling, that one would expect to find those who work well free from the faults of those who are cursed with the love and the practice of idleness. Work, too, produces that solid good money which the Bible says “answers all things;” and large sums of that valuable commodity go into the pockets of the working classes. Many of them earn as much as many clergymen and officers in the army, yet they live in discomfort and their children are in rags. And why? Because the silver and the gold, instead of remaining in a bank or going forth in good exchange, flee into the pockets of the tobacconists and the publicans. *They* are the winners of British money, and *they* profit by the work of Britons. Till the gold goes in the right direction, till British workmen educate themselves and their children to lead happy home lives, it is not lowered franchises and popular rights that will make Britain a free country and her workmen good citizens.

After all, what we need to put wrongs to rights is Christianity amongst all our classes. We need

* From “Mrs. Bayly’s Workmen and their Difficulties.”

workmen that are not ashamed of striving to be God's workmen, who desire to live for another world as well as for this, and who think of the rights of their neighbours' souls. God be praised that we have some bright examples in wellnigh every trade amongst us—some salt in the mass, some light in the lamps which cannot be hid, some instances of men who work well for God, and do their own work as being His also. I shall conclude with one short example, and a short poem which is like a trumpet-call to arms.

"Where's Alick?" asked a minister one day of a baker, as he stepped into his store.

"Alick is below, sir, in the bakehouse," replied the man of bread.

"May I speak with him?" asked the minister.

"Certainly, certainly, sir," said the baker; "walk below, sir."

As the minister went down the stair leading to the bakehouse, he heard a voice saying,

"Lord, help me to serve Thee! Lord, keep me faithful! Lord, make me a good preacher!"

The voice was Alick's; and when the minister reached the bakehouse, he found the lad, with his shirt-sleeves rolled up to his shoulders, kneading dough with all his might, and praying as earnestly as he was working. No doubt he was greatly pleased to find the youthful preacher so well employed. No doubt he felt that the appointment which he wanted Alick to fill would be well supplied.


The Lord soon called Alick from the bakehouse to the pulpit, from which he fed thousands of hungry souls with the bread of life. The young man carried the working and praying spirit which he had in the workshop into the ministry. The result was that God made him a useful and honourable man, for our Alick was no less a personage than Alexander Mather, one of the Presidents of the Wesleyan Conference.

“Come, let us anew our journey pursue,
Roll round like the year,
And never stand still till the Master appear.
His adorable will let us gladly fulfil,
And our talents improve
By the patience of hope, and the labours of love.
Our life is a dream ; our time as a stream
Glides swiftly away,
And the fugitive moment refuses to stay.
The arrow is flown, the moment is gone,
The millennial year
Rushes on to our view, and Eternity’s here.
Oh that each in the day of His coming may say,
I have fought my way through,
I have finished the work Thou didst give me to do.
Oh that each from his Lord may receive the glad word,
Well and faithfully done,
Enter into my joy and sit down on my throne.”

“Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.”—Gal. vi. 7.

What a beautiful sight is the harvest field ! Poets have sung the praises of the golden grain. Painters have spread upon canvas the busy sun-lighted scene. Those who spoke in old time, moved by the Holy

Ghost, must have observed with delight and interest the operations of the harvest field, for in the Bible we have "the voices of joy in the plentiful field," and the bringing home of the rich harvest treasures, and the sure return of the due season, and the certainty of the seed that was sown, and no other, springing up into life, held out to us as encouragements to patience and diligence, and as warnings against bad seed—of indolent sowing—procrastination in our appointed work. God's eyes must have rested with pleasure upon the precious seed-bearing grasses when He pronounced them "very good" in that first marvellous Creation autumn. Nay more, when He placed the moon to rule the night, He ordered the revolutions of that fair planet with a special reference to the needs of reapers and farmers! In the sunny lands bordering upon the equator, where there is little change of weather except at regular times, and consequently where there is no need of the feebler light of the moon for harvest work, no change takes place in her hour of rising, which is regularly about forty-eight minutes later every night than the former. In our colder, darker regions, however, which are at a considerable distance from the equator, the autumnal moons rise much sooner after sunset, and in their broad, bright beauty rejoice the hearts and lighten the labours of the harvest workers. What a testimony to the presence and tender supervision of the Lord of the harvest! I read a beautiful anecdote



the other day, showing how He makes His harvests abide their appointed time for fulfilling His word and their work. In 1682, eight or nine hundred Waldensian Christians, who had been exiled from their beloved homes in the valleys of Piedmont, were in great danger of starvation during their difficult and dangerous return thither. Some fields of corn, ready for the sickle, had been unexpectedly covered by what men doubtless called an untimely snow-storm. When the hungry wanderers reached the spot, they found that a sudden thaw had set in, and soon God's corn was ripe and ready for God's people. In the word of God we have not only precepts, illustrations, and pictures, but also examples of His will lived out upon the harvest field. In the book of Ruth, we have a conscientious landowner and farmer—a God-fearing gleaner and courteous reapers. How beautiful a salutation from the farmer to his reapers, "The Lord be with you!" How beautiful the response, "The Lord bless you!" Would that there were as kindly and reverential a spirit afloat in all the fields of our country between the laird and the labourer, between the farmer and the farm servant! Would that there were as reserved and dignified a demeanour between our young men and maidens as between those of that Eastern harvest field! Boaz doubtless was not perfect as a master—his farm servants may sometimes have had grounds of complaint—they on their side were not without faults—yet with the spirit

of that touching benediction resting between them, one can see how the little grievances would become softened, the faults amended, and the hearts of masters and servants welded together. I read the other day part of a diary, said to have been kept by a farmer who lived in old days; he must have been a sort of Boaz in his own way—that is, combining the spiritual with the practical—a man of God in the field as well as in the prayer meeting; and whose earthly business, as well as his heavenly, prospered because he was “fervent in spirit serving the Lord.” Here are a few extracts:—

“Rose at three o’clock, and met One who said, ‘Yet a little while is the light with you; walk while ye have the light; the night cometh when no man can work; my father worketh hitherto, and I work.’ Rang the great bell, and roused the girls to milking—went up to the farm, roused the horse-keeper—fed the horses while he was getting up—examined the shoulders, heels, traces, chaff, and corn, of eight horses going to plough—mended the acre staff—cut some thongs, whipcorded the boys’ plough-whips—pumped the troughs full—saw the hogs fed—walked into barley field—barleys fine, picked off a few tiles and stones, and cut a few thistles—the pease fine but foul; the charlock must be topped—the tares doubtful; the fly seems to have taken them—prayed for rain, but could not see a cloud—came round to the wheat field—wheats rather thin, but the finest colour

in the wind—sent four women on to the shortest
wheel—ordered one man to weed the ridges of the
long wheel, and two women to keep rank and file
with him in the furrows—thistles many—blue-bottles
no end—traversed all the wheat field—came to the
fallow field—the ditches have run crooked—set them
straight—the flag-sods cut too much, rush-sods too
little, strength wasted, show the men how to three-
corner them—laid out more work for the ditchers—
sat me down under a bush—read two verses, and
thought of His lovingkindness in the midst of his
temple—gave out ‘*Come all harmonious tongues,*’ and
set Mount Ephraim tune—rose up—whistled—the
dogs wagged their tails, and on we went—got home,
dinner ready—drank some milk, and fell asleep—
proof-sheet from Mr. Archdeacon—corrected it—
washed, dressed, went to meeting, and preached from
‘*The end of all things is at hand; be ye sober and
watch unto prayer.*’”

To return again to the Harvest. It is good to
remember that it is very specially used in Scripture
as a type of the great SEPARATION which our eyes—
the eyes of all who read this page, and of all the
world beside—will look upon—aye, and take part
in. “The Harvest is the end of the world.”
Farmers, farm servants, merry lads and lasses of the
golden fields, are you ready for that great Harvest
day? When that sharp sickle, of which we read in
Rev. xiv. 14—19, has passed upon each of you, what

and where will it leave you? Chaff and tares to be burned up in unquenchable fire—part and parcel of that harvest, which is “a HEAP in the day of desperate sorrow”—or good wheat, precious grain laid up in the safe garner of the Lord Jesus Christ? If the answer to these questions is not what you and I could wish, now is the time to flee from the wrath to come—to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to be **SAVED**.

“The angel comes; he comes to reap
The harvest of the Lord;
O'er all the earth with fatal sweep
Wide waves his flaming sword,
And who are they their doom to bide
Thus gathered up and bound?
The tares whose rank luxuriant pride
Choked the fair crop around.
And who are they reserved in store,
God's treasure house to fill?
The wheat a hundredfold that bore
Amid surrounding ill.
O King of mercy! grant us power
Thy fearful wrath to flee:
In thy destroying angel's hour
O gather us to Thee.”

KEBLE.

XIV.

GUIDE and bless us, O our Father !
In the long and toilsome way ;
Be Thou watchful o'er our footsteps,
Lest our feeble feet should stray.
There are dangers that surround us,
There are trials we must meet ;
Be a light unto our pathway,
And a lamp unto our feet.

Guide and bless us, O our Father !
Keep us pure and good within ;
Give us strength to shun temptation,
And each *little petty sin* ;
Twine Thy loving arms about us,
Keep our working hands in Thine ;
" 'Tis the little, little foxes
That destroy the tender vine."


ANON.

XIV.

LITTLE FOXES.

"Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines; for our vines have tender grapes."—Cant. ii. 15.

IN the beautiful vineyards of the East foxes are frequent and dangerous visitors; an ancient author compared "soldiers to foxes, because armies desolate countries as foxes do vineyards." The beautiful foliage of the low-trained vines conceal the creeping, cunning fox, of whom little is seen or guessed, although cluster after cluster of sunny grapes fall into his jaws. With but a paw visible here, or a quick movement there, or an innocent-looking ear or nose veiled by green leaves, the intruders are often taken for harmless creatures, who have no appetite for "tender grapes." A clergyman was once preaching in a somewhat quaint and homely style upon this subject. Referring to the "little foxes" as the so-called small and insidious faults and sins which mar our religious profession, he said that many people would not believe that these were foxes at all, and, instead of turning them out, said, carelessly, "Oh, it isn't a fox; it's only a poor wee doggie; it won't do any harm!"



It is very easy for us, however, to be keepers of our neighbours' vineyards, and our eyes are quick to descry the "little foxes," and their ravages upon the tender grapes of other people's Christian profession. It is, generally speaking, only our own cunning foxes which we take for "doggies;" only our own vines which we believe to be strong and healthy, when they are wellnigh devoured at the root; only our own grapes which we persist in admiring, and pointing out to the view of others as rich and clustering, when in reality foxes' feet are treading them, and foxes' mouths are munching them. Let us then try to draw some practical personal lessons from this beautiful verse of Holy Writ. Let us bear every man his own burden—not seeking to lift it upon his neighbour, or to look upon his brother's shortcomings instead of his own. Finding fault with others is only a Christian work when our knowledge of their inconsistencies comes out of self-knowledge—when our anger at their faults is tempered by greater anger at our own—when our consciousness of their sin-produced sufferings is accompanied by distinct remembrance and confession of and heart-broken contrition for our own sins towards God and man. Said Adams, "Whenever I spy a fault in another, I am determined to look for two in myself, and they will not be far to seek." In this spirit, let us each search out and see what sort of things these "little foxes" may be, and what effect they have upon our green vines and our tender grapes.

Ministers, lay-preachers, missionaries, colporteurs, conductors of prayer meetings—in short, all workers in the Lord's vineyard, both men and women—are singularly beset with "little foxes," and singularly unconscious of their existence. All the "I's and the me's of Self," all the complacent details, unnecessarily told, all the throbbing exultation too often infesting successful work, are little foxes which, cunningly hid by Satan from the workers, nay, believed by them to be "doggies," are nevertheless sure devourers of the beautiful fruit. Or, on the other hand—for the devil has plentiful variety of foxes—we have the fear of man, spiritual sloth and idleness, undue discouragement, mortification when Self does nothing, and unwillingness to confess that Self never has and never can do anything—ah! these foxes do also spoil the vines, and render unlikely a harvest of good grapes. Or are we among the number of those who really with the good hope of the Gospel in our hearts shrink from making a good confession "BECAUSE religious professors are so inconsistent"? This sounds wise and prudent; but in God's sight it is folly and disobedience, because it is attempting to be wiser than God's own Word. He has said, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, THOU SHALT BE SAVED. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Every

hard judgment, then—all misunderstanding of God's weak and inconsistent sons and daughters, all indignant watch over our brother's "motes," and indulgent passing by our own "beams," every self-righteous congratulation that we have made no profession, and are, therefore, holier than inconsistent professors, are foxes so keen and cunning that, even if the vine be left a living vine, it needs little foresight to be sure that no grapes will rejoice the hearts of the passers-by, or bring honour to the keeper of the vineyard. Or are we bold and brave professors of the truth, almost envied by the more fearful and timid? What busy creature is that hid by the abundant foliage? Ah! it is the biggest, bravest fox of all—it is Inconsistency. Many grapes may have smiled upon that fair vineyard wall; but, oh! how sad to see them fall into the jaws of the cunning enemy. Watch and ward would have been kept had an army of open foes appeared; but, alas! the small gaps in the vineyard hedge have not been filled up, the doors left open, and the foxes thought beneath the notice of the valiant vine-dresser bent upon doing great things. Oh! loudly professing and inconsistent Christian, it may be that thy vine is part of the true vine, and therefore thou wilt be saved—*as by fire*, but remember the words of our text are not that the grapes only are in danger from foxes, but that they "spoil the vines." Take heed lest after all, your vine, gnawed at the root,—withered in all its branches, as well as

despoiled of its fair clusters, should be only fit to be gathered and "cast into the fire."

An endless variety of species do we find amongst the genus "fox"—covetousness, want of straight forwardness, white lies, petty dishonesties, censoriousness, strict profession made and enjoined upon others, but only maintained in conduct when it can be done without self-denial; bad temper, envy, that "house idol Self," in all its forms, worldliness, frivolity—oh! cannot each one of us look within and see at a glance these foxes? only, alas! we are so accustomed to the sight, and they are perhaps so small, though so hungry, of their kind, that we have never yet taken the trouble of asking what kind of animals they were, or how they employed their teeth, or satisfied their hunger. A little farther examination would enable us to see how cunningly these creatures suit themselves to our positions and characters. Wives, for instance, would find their most dangerous little foxes to be carelessness of domestic comfort and household management—want of sympathy with their tired and tempted husbands—seeking and prizing admiration from other eyes—imprudent gossiping—and betrayal of their own domestic grievances. Husbands would recognise a fox in the "one glass"—in the "innocent" pipe at the tavern—in the eyes wandering after variety—in the rude voice and the rough rebuke. Mothers would tremble when they feel that they have allowed their children to be disobedient and

punished them not; or selfish, and restrained them not; and would say of their own weak self-indulgence, "a fox, a fox!" Children professing to "love Jesus" would learn to give the right name to their inattention to their lessons—to their preferring themselves to their companions—to their indolence, and self-will in little things at home. Masters and mistresses would tremble for their "tender grapes" when they felt tempted to undue harshness, unreasonable expectations, want of encouragement and sympathy, carelessness of the temptations and trials likely to beset their servants. Servants would think of the work left undone, or carelessly performed—of the crooked furrow, and the ill-tended cattle, or the spoiled dinner, or the ill-sewed seam as foxes, little in their sight, but big in the eyes of all who know that they profess to be the Lord's. The list of foxes, and of those peculiarly exposed to their wiles, would be endless. I have only attempted to indicate a few, as a useful exercise in these days when there is great tendency and strong temptation to be less strict in daily, practical life than in spiritual profession. It would be little kindness, however, to lead people to be constantly watching for foxes if they were left to destroy them by their own strength and wisdom. Some there are besides fully aware of the loss of their tender grapes, and who are in constant fear and despair because of the little foxes; but their very struggles seem to do harm—the fences seem to break

down all the easier after they have attempted to repair them. Thank God, there is a sure remedy. Here is a message from the Lord of Hosts to such poor, needy, inconsistent ones, longing to keep the vines and the grapes of the Lord's own planting and fostering, from the cunning fox: "Prove me now herewith, if I will not open you the windows of Heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it; and I WILL REBUKE THE DEVOURER, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground, neither shall your vine cast her fruits before the time in the field, saith the Lord of Hosts."* Carry your inconsistencies, your daily faults, your "little foxes," as well as your great sins, to Jesus—and He will "*take* us the foxes." Blessed is the plea which we may bring to Him—more sure and blessed than the more selfish one of bare salvation for our souls. The great Master of the vineyard "looks" that His choice vines should bring forth good grapes. Why? Oh! touching and gracious declaration: "Herein is my Father GLORIFIED, that ye bear much fruit."† "That ye might be called trees of RIGHTEOUSNESS, the planting of the Lord, that HE MIGHT BE GLORIFIED."‡

As, perhaps, there is no species of fox larger, and fatter, and hungrier than "unkind words," I cannot forbear closing this chapter with an admirable article which originally appeared in our little Aberdeenshire

* Mal. iii. 10, 11. † Isa. v. 1—4; and John xv. 8. ‡ Isa. lxi. 3.

Sunbeam. It is headed, "The Power of Kind Words."

"Kind words do not cost much. They never blister the tongue or lips. Though they do not cost much, yet they accomplish much. They help one's goodnature and goodwill. Soft words soften our own soul. Angry words are fuel to the flames of wrath, and make it blaze the more fiercely. Kind words make other people goodnatured. Cold words freeze people, and hot words scorch them, and bitter words make them bitter, and wrathful words make them wrathful. There is such a rush of all other kinds of words in our day that it seems desirable to give kind words a chance among them. There are vain words, and spiteful words, and silly words, and boisterous words, and warlike words. Kind words, also, produce their own image on men's souls. And a beautiful image it is; they soothe, and quiet, and comfort the heart. They shame us of sour, morose, unkind feelings.' When these suggestions, printed on a slip of paper, accidentally came in my way,—Yes, said I to myself, though I know not the author of them, these are true words about kind words, and they cannot be too widely circulated. I have known *three words only*, spoken in a *kind tone*, become the means at once of saving a life, and of 'saving a soul from death.' In a small country town in the south of England there was a woman whose violent temper and tongue, in addition

to her ill conduct, had so outraged and disgusted all her neighbourhood that at length nobody would speak to her. Without comfort or resources within, and thus cut off from all society, she became so miserable that she determined to put an end to her own life, by throwing herself into a deep part of the river that skirted the town. As she was going along the bank to do her purpose, a Christian minister, who was returning from his morning walk, and who knew her only by sight, said to her, in a kind tone, 'Good morning, Mary.' Those *three* words, kindly uttered, changed her purpose. She said within herself—as she afterwards told him—'There is then *one* who will speak kindly to me: I will go home and mend my ways.' She became a diligent attendant on the instructions of that minister, and a thoroughly altered woman. And among the many pleasant recollections of Him who 'spake as never man spake,' are not His *kind words* patterns for 'all who profess and call themselves Christians'? Though we cannot hear the tone, we can feel of what spirit it must have been, when He said, 'Daughter, be of good comfort; Daughter, go in peace; She hath done what she could; Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me;'—and when He spoke weeping at the grave of Lazarus;—and when He prayed for His murderers, 'Father, forgive.' And we can discern also how the same spirit passed into the soul of the rigid persecutor Saul, and made him the benevolent Paul,

overflowing with kindness, and delighting to describe what Christian love is; and into the gentle heart of the apostle John, refining whatever in him had been by nature affectionate into the divinely grateful temper of 'the new commandment,' and inspiring him to say to us, 'Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins: Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.'"

Want of love! Yes, that is the worst of all foxes—one that is found in the whole Christian Church, whether in hamlet or village, in town or country. "But I wish my brother well; I don't hate him; only how can I love him when he is so this, and so that, and so the other thing?" Have you noticed, O unloving disciple, that it is not only said that "He that hateth his brother is a murderer," but "He that LOVETH NOT his brother abideth in death."* The positive sin has its true nature defined, and the far more frequent negative has also its own awful condemnation.

* 1 John iii. 14.

XV.

" LORD, rock me in Thy cradle,"
'Twas the prayer of a child,—
Lord, rock me in Thy cradle,
O'er the world's waters wild.

Lord, rock me in Thy cradle,
O'er the world's stormy sea ;
With Christ, what ill can harm me,
If Thy glory circles me ?

I am safe, in fire and water,
If His arm upholds me still,
All mine enemies He'll scatter,
When He whispers, " Peace, be still."

Lord, rock me in Thy cradle,
And hold me with Thy hand :
With me walk the stormy waters,
Till I reach the promised land.

Lord, rock me in Thy glory,
And cradle me in love,
Thy presence-cloud still o'er me
Till I reach Thy home above.

Lord, rock me in Thy cradle,
Till the night of weeping's o'er,
Fold Thy soft, soft mantle o'er me
Till I sing "on yonder shore."

M. P. AIRD.

XV.

PORTRAITS OF WOMEN.

“Out of weakness were made strong.”—Heb. xi. 34.

AT the very best, woman is a feeble instrument, formed to lean on a stronger than herself; when obliged to stand alone, her heart is very helpless and her steps very tottering. Her strength, such as it is, comes out of very weakness; and as she passes through this stormy life, the most befitting language for her lips would be from the touching child-words we have quoted, “Lord, rock me in Thy cradle.” It is true it is the fashion now for women to be independent, to glory in being alone, “to go ahead” on the dangerous road of “perfect equality.” I do not believe, however, that any woman, even of this remarkable period, but in the depths of her heart acknowledges her clinging, dependent being, and that the exquisite words of the poetess are as true in the estimation of the strongest-minded as in the feeblest:—

“Happier, happier far than thou,
With the laurel on thy brow,
She who makes the household hearth
Happy but to one on earth.”

What a blessing it is that our tender, loving Saviour has provided a home, and a refuge, and a changeless love for the many women who, with acknowledged feebleness of heart and frame, and with no home love and tender strength to help and cheer them, have all the clinging affections, all the helplessness of their happier sisters! Each believing woman, be she solitary or a home dweller, has Christ for her Head, and may be nourished, and cherished, and loved, and helped by Him even as, and still more than the happiest wife by the tenderest husband. What a pity, then, that strong-minded women should ignore the needs, and strive to stifle the feelings for which there is such wonderful provision made in the tender heart and Gospel of our Lord and Saviour! I have before spoken of the adaptation of Scripture to every daily work and event; and to the weak ones among us there is great comfort and interest in the exact portraiture of ourselves, our faults, and our encouragements which we meet with in the female biographies of the Bible. Let us go over a few together.

SARAI.—Gen. xi.—xxiii.

We first find this woman with her noble husband in a heathen home. We know little more of her than that she was very beautiful, had no child, and that her name, though sweet and soft to pronounce, signified "Contention," not altogether an undeserved appellation. Abram and Sarai, God-fearers in the

midst of idols, showed that they were IIs by learning and practising subjection. When it was Terah the father's will to go from the old happy Chaldean home, all he did was to "take" the son and the daughter with him; no word of murmuring or remonstrance meets us. They had learned the lesson of subjection, which can alone teach how to command. The new home in Haran was soon marred by death. Terah died. He who was to learn thoroughly to command his household, now learns a higher lesson even than obedience to a parent. Abram leaves his country, and his kindred, and the house, and the grave of his father, and departed, as the Lord had spoken to him. This time it is he that "takes" Sarai, his wife, to go out on a weary journey. And here again we have subjection. No murmur is recorded from Sarai, yet the journey from Haran to Moreh was one which would try the nerves and the temper of many a modern wife. "The Canaanite was in the land." Fears, attacks, night alarms, rough roads in the plain and over the mountains;—but they had an altar as well as a tent—they were worshippers as well as strangers—they prayed as often as they rested. Frequently it must have been very inconvenient to build an altar as well as pitch a tent. Often in our days we take advantage of the smallest extra trouble in our "tents," not to rear a family altar, but this little company were evidently kept safe and comfortable in

the rough, long journey by the blessed union of praying and travelling. Another trouble arises; there was a famine in the land, and it was grievous. To all her fatigues and troubles Sarai had now this added, that she had scanty and probably unpleasant food. How often when we have been through six troubles, our hearts are so perverse that when the seventh comes we quite forget the help, and where to look for more! So it was with Abram and Sarai—they had been kept from the Canaanite, but they would not believe that God could keep them equally well from the famine. Woman has two privileges, that of subjection and that of influence. Sarai might well, without going a step beyond her place, as true woman and good wife, have reminded her husband who to trust to, where to go for bread. But not one word of remonstrance is recorded, and the couple go down to Egypt for help. Is not Egypt—the type throughout Scripture of the world—still the refuge of many a couple in times of sorrow, who yet profess to be the Lord's? One instance of want of faith always leads to another. Again, a lion arises in the path, which Abram would not have encountered had he kept the path of obedience. Sarai's very gift from the Lord, her beauty, is now the trouble. This man of great faith still fails in the lesser things. So instead of commending his case to God, he says that which is false, because it is intended to deceive, and makes his wife do so also. Like all women who do

not strive to exercise a good influence, Sarai now begins to exercise a bad one. Much commended and much bepraised is she, and her fair, lovely looks; she wins the admiring commendation of the princes for a time, but the beauty of the Lord her God was not then upon her. The plainest woman that ever lived, who walked in truth, and faith, and meekness, would be more comely in the sight of God than Sarai in her untruthful but courtly beauty. But the usual fate befalls her and her husband of those who forsake their God, even for a time; great evils follow the influence, even, alas! of the God-fearing woman in that heathen place. As is often seen amongst us, the conduct of the Egyptians was the godlier of the twain, and humiliated and ashamed, Abram is "sent away" from the court, where they might, if they had told the Truth, have been safe, honoured, and useful guests. This humiliation, however, was one of the "all things" which worked together for good to the patriarch pair. It brought them "out of Egypt." How many a lesson of the world's insufficiency they must have learned as they retraced their weary steps, "heavy," too, as the word is, with the cattle, the silver, and the gold, which had not given them dignity or honour in the sight of the heathen! But God was to them as He is to us in Christ Jesus, the very God for the weak and the back-sliding. Abram and Sarai go back to the place where they had been at "the beginning." No altar is

recorded as being built in Egypt. No voice of prayer ascended amid the admiration of the world ; but now the restored and the penitent call on the name of the Lord. After this restoration we find a time of consistent walking, and of active service, and then one of the instances of faith which have made Abram an example to all. Abram is promised a son, and Abram simply believes it. It would appear from the narrative that he had told this to his wife, who had put her own interpretation upon the promise. After waiting some little time, Sarai proves herself a hindrance and not a helpmeet to her husband. She goes again in another way to Egypt for help. She refuses to wait, she takes her own way of bringing her wishes to pass, and she gives her Egyptian handmaid to her husband. When the natural consequences follow, and she herself is despised, ah ! how foolish again is her conduct ! Sarai does not see her own share of the wrong—she has no sense of sin, but she at once blames others for her own deed. Abram, not expecting violence from his fondly-cherished wife, gives his handmaiden up to her tender mercies. Sarai still determines to manage her own difficulties in her own way, and chose accordingly the very worst possible. She dealt so hardly with the poor Egyptian that Hagar fled from her face. I have spoken before of subjection as the lesson which all have to learn—whether citizen, or servant, or soldier, or child, or woman. All good

nations must be made up of those who know how to submit, so here we find that the woman who "despised" her mistress is sent back even to ill usage, and that the mother of the future hosts of Arabia is only recognised in her true station as "Hagar, Sarai's maid." Years rolled on. Abram is called Abraham, the father of nations;—Sarai is named Sarah, "princess," but where is the man-child? While in intimate conversation with God, Abraham utters a prayer, a model prayer, for all believing parents. "Oh that Ishmael may live before thee!" and the immediate answer, even to the prayer uttered in partial unbelief of God's work, may well encourage parents. "As for Ishmael, I have heard thee; behold, I have blessed him." Not displeased with the father's longing for the life of him who was the child of doubt and not of promise, the Lord reiterates and strengthens the promise that Sarah should have a child the next year.

A beautiful household picture next we have in the tent of Mamre. Angels, nay the Lord Jesus Himself, entertained unawares! How good it is when a household is so well-managed that an unexpected event or arrival causes more work, indeed, but no grumbling or disturbance! When the three "men" appeared at the tent-door, all the little household engaged in the duties of hospitality with one heart, and all did their best. Sarah kneaded the meal, and baked the cakes,

well and "quickly." The servant cooked the calf, which was "tender and good," and Abraham served the feast, and lost no time in his operations. What a contrast to poor, inconsistent Lot's household in Sodom! Though he had a wife and daughters, and servants, yet that evening's supper for the two angels seems to have been entirely served and prepared by Lot alone. Sarah, however, like many another, was a better worker than believer;—when from behind the tent-door she heard it said that the old, wellnigh forgotten promise was about to be fulfilled,—Sarah "laughed." Impulsive as she was by nature, the rebuke of the God-like angel, though addressed to her husband, no sooner met her ears, than she tried to mend matters by making them a great deal worse. Instead of confessing her fault—which few of us like to do—she told a falsehood. Sarah denied, saying, "I laughed not," for she was afraid. Fear, alas! is a fruitful source of want of truthfulness in homes. Oh to have the perfect love which casteth out fear, the ruling principle to God and to man! "Nay, but thou didst laugh," was the exquisitely tender, grave rebuke which Sarah received. Every word of prevarication, every attempt at deceiving ourselves that we are speaking the truth, are all known to Him who is THE Truth.

Frequent sinning, frequent forgiving, falling and arising again, we find in the Old Testament biographies just as in our own lives. After the bitter experience of Egypt, after the Lord's grave rebuke

for falsehood, it does seem sad and strange to find a repetition of the old deception. Sarah, though now past ninety years of age, was still too beautiful for Abraham to confess his relationship to her. Again, he tells the half truth, which is as bad as a whole falsehood. Again the conduct of God's people is infinitely worse than that of the heathen king, the noble Abimelech. His short but touching rebuke to Sarah shows that love of admiration, so common among women, was one of her faults, and that she had displayed it among the heathen. "Behold he (her husband) is to thee a covering of the eyes unto all that are with thee. Thus she was reprov'd." Even our sins cannot keep back the fulfilment of God's promises. It is to the backsliding Sarah, to the unfaithful Abraham, that God again comes in His forgiving undeserved goodness; and Sarah bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. It is good to find Sarah recollecting and drawing a lesson from her sinful laugh. A new song, a different laughter was hers now; so she says, "God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear shall laugh with me." We are apt enough to let others hear our murmurs, our tears, our unbelief; but how seldom we show, and how little we feel, of that rejoicing and thankfulness which would gladden the hearts of others! There was still a transaction of much pain for Abraham; the son of unbelief was to be "cast

out" with his mother. It was according to God's will, and Sarah was His instrument; yet it is sad to find her again falling into sin by doing it from a wrong motive in a wrong way, and still without any apparent sorrow for her original fault in the matter. We do not find Sarah mentioned at all in the blessed tragedy of Moriah, and may hope that she at least acquiesced in Abraham's faith and obedience. But the end of Sarah's long life is now at hand. After a hundred and twenty-seven years of most varied experience of life and of inconsistent walking, yet still ranked among God's "holy women," Sarah laid down her head and died in Kirjath-arba. With all her faults, Sarah had lived "so as to be missed." It was long before her son was comforted after his mother's death, and sorely did her husband weep and mourn for her. Bought specially for her, she was the first who was laid in that wonderful Cave of Machpelah, which has still to give up its dead when life, and light, and honour has returned to the land of the Patriarchs.

REBEKAH.—Gen. xxiv.—xxvii.


What noble service we read of in the Scriptures! Examples both to those who are the servants of men, yet still serving the Lord Christ, as well as to those whose service is only and directly due to their Heavenly Master.

In this interesting narrative we have two examples of faithful servants. Of Deborah, Rebekah's nurse,

there is not much related; but from the special introduction of her name, her death, and her burial, we have reason to believe that she was one whose service God had peculiarly blessed. We know, too, that, like Sarah, she had lived so as to be missed, for the oak under which the good old nurse was buried was called the "Oak of Weeping." To this day the Oriental servants, when they *are* faithful and true, are peculiarly so, and it was my privilege to see and know some years ago a little of one who seemed to have come straight out of the Bible! "Faithful Hannai," as she was called, was the daughter of a wealthy Chaldean Christian of good birth, whose name was Khoja Thoma. Considerably reduced in circumstances, she became servant in the family of A. N. Groves, a devoted missionary at Bagdad. From 1831 till 1865, when she entered a better service still, she remained in that family, not accepting fee or reward, but giving and receiving a full measure of "love." Being, as some say, "a real lady" originally, she thought no service too menial for one who loved her master and all who belonged to him. During the plague, the siege, the inundation, the exciting journeys by land and water of many years in the East, as well as during the quiet, unexciting years of a widow's English home, Hannai ever shone as the faithful servant. When asked on one occasion whether she was to wear mourning for a distant relative, her answer was, "Go into mourning! certainly

not; so long as my master lives I shall never wear mourning." Devoted to her ancient country, and ever remembering her Scripture origin, she never became the thoroughly naturalised Englishwoman. Upon one occasion she astonished a Bristol tradesman so much by her animated account of her country as mentioned in the Word of God, that we are told "he felt carried back four thousand years, as if he stood in the presence of one who might have heard of, if not spoken to Abraham when he first left Ur of the Chaldees." Deeply mourned by a wide circle, "faithful Hannai," like Deborah, might be said to be buried beneath an "oak of weeping."

The "eldest servant" of Abraham's household, "this Eliezer, of Damascus," he who would have been Abraham's heir had Isaac not been promised and given, is, as it were, the hero, or principal character, of this beautiful story of Rebekah's youth. No selfish regret for his loss, no remembrance of what yet might be his if Isaac had no child, crosses his mind. Faithful servant to Abraham and Isaac, the mainspring of his service is, that he is faithful servant first, and above all, to his God. He shows this very specially by prayer. We have in this history instances of informal prayer, specific prayer, quickly-answered prayer. Eliezer followed Abraham's example of thus hallowing his steps; but there was this difference, the master had time to erect altars by the way, the very stones of which were marks to all coming



time of the presence of worshippers. But Eliezer had no time, no materials for these outward memorials; so he pours out his requests "in his heart," just as the busiest of us may do by the wayside, the hearth, or the workshop. He prayed, too, just for what he wanted day by day. What an exquisite morning prayer for each of our busy lives, "O Lord God, I pray Thee send me good speed THIS day"! And then he tells, in the plainest, simplest terms, exactly what he desired God would do for him. It was quickly-answered prayer. Before he had done speaking, the living answer came forth in Rebekah, who does in every particular as he had requested. "Before they call I will answer." Rebekah, who thus "came out," is seen in her best aspect. Young, fair, active, and obliging, she seems a most suitable daughter-in-law for Abraham, who was so prompt in daily work and home hospitality. To do everything promptly and in order is the way to make time. Probably Rebekah was greatly under the influence of her good nurse Deborah at this time, and owed much of her activity to her practical teaching. The well, in old days, as at present, in the East, was a place where the women used to congregate and gossip, something like the washing-greens in our country; but Rebekah did not stay to speak to the other women, but did all her work quickly and well. The good servant, having prayed, was now not ashamed to praise, and he recognises how the Lord led him, being "in the

way." It is a good question to ask ourselves, "What 'way' am I in? Am I in the 'right way,' in the 'Way Christ Jesus'?" because till then we cannot expect the Lord to lead and to prepare our daily way. We often hear young people complain of seeking God, and not finding Him, and in most cases we find that they are pursuing another "way" than His. He is not likely to be "found" in the ballroom, the theatre, the round of worldly companionship.

"And the damsel ran and told them of her mother's house these things." She did *more* than speak; she showed the ornaments bestowed upon her. A beautiful instance of the speaking and the showing which we considered in a former chapter. After much commune, the damsel signifies her ready assent to Eliezer's proposal, and he accordingly took Rebekah and her nurse, and went his way. Isaac we find "praying" in the field at eventide; he had prayed for the gift; he was now praying before the gift came, a good preparation for a wife and a home; and we are, therefore, not surprised to find that the prayed-for wife became a blessing and a comforter. A happy home that tent must have been so long as they "dwelt by the well." If we but tried to do that spiritually, how fair, and green, and happy our lives would be! We content ourselves with drawing water painfully and wearily every Sabbath, perhaps, or prayer-meeting night, or in the morning and evening; but let us dwell beside the

well, let us be ever ready to drink of the living water. We find for a time that the happy early influences lasted. Isaac and his wife keep up prayerful intercourse with God. Isaac entreats the Lord, and the Lord is entreated. Rebekah in perplexing circumstances goes at once to inquire of the Lord, and the Lord at once answers her, and she becomes the joyful mother of twin sons. From this time all is mysterious in the character of Rebekah. She is one of those who so frequently puzzle us in ordinary life. We shrink from placing her among the ungodly. We remember her prayerfulness, and we try to hope the best, but her inconsistencies are so glaring, on the other hand, that she appears to be "neither one thing nor another"—a state of matters which is, however, impossible. Oh that each one of us would strive to give out a clear sound, and to show distinctly Whose we are! About this time in Rebekah's history we find the same incident of deception so nearly alike the two cases recorded of Abraham and Sarah, that we need only pause on it to draw one new lesson. Isaac repeats the same falsehood as his father, without the same excuse, for Rebekah was not even his half-sister. This ought to be a warning to parents, for children when they imitate, always exaggerate the faults of their parents. Yet we find Isaac after this fall, and in spite of some remaining faults, advancing in godliness towards God and man, and, like David, we are told he went "going and growing" (see marg.)

under the blessing of God ; but we find no hint of progression in Rebekah. Evidently a bad training mother from the beginning, her children were brought up with partiality and without any teachings of self-control. Esau sells his birthright for a mess of coarse red soup, made of a sort of pea, because he could not bear a little hunger ; and when he is older, he marries into heathen families, without caring that he bitterly grieves his parents. Jacob was so brought up in cunning and deceit, that like many children of small as well as of "larger growth," he did not mind doing wrong, except when found out. After miserable scenes of hypocrisy and falsehood, Rebekah carries her point, but with her own way she gets distress and misery : "Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices." Even then, not perfectly true, she sends Jacob away under a false pretence, and never sees her darling son again. After his varied career, Jacob only returned to see his father die, but nothing is said of his mother. Her life seems to go out in darkness, for we hear not of her death, no sound of mourning, no word of sorrow is recorded of her—nothing save a brief notice that she too was buried with her husband in the Cave of Machpelah.

The faults and backslidings of Old Testament saints are doubtless recorded to make us hate the sin so strong in them, but so much worse in us who know

Jesus, the sin-bearer, the sin-destroyer, as they never did; but also for our encouragement, for like them we may fall but may arise again, like them we have a God of tenderest pity, who recognises all the good and hides His face from all the honestly hated evil, "in Christ Jesus." Unlike Rebekah's sad blank of history, of which there is not one future commendatory notice, we have enough recorded of Jacob in after years to give us good and sure hope concerning him. "Fear not, thou worm Jacob." "The excellency of Jacob, whom I have loved"—wonderful, comforting, assuring words to those who feel weak, sinful, and "worm"-like. When God hath given commandment to bless, none can reverse, and though Jacob's faults loom out clear in the distance, yet God has said, "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob."*

MANOAH'S WIFE.—Judges xiii.

It seems almost a pity that we do not know the individual name of this good wife and expectant mother, whose attractive character and motherly history interests us so deeply. No complaint meets our ears so often amongst all classes, but especially amongst working women, as complaints against circumstance. "I should be better than I am if I had better neighbours," are very usual words. But here we find a God-fearing couple peculiarly honoured of God, yet living in worse or as bad surroundings as the neighbourhood of courts and ta-

* Num. xxiii. 20, 21.

verns,—Scotch “lands” and whisky shops. They lived amongst “the Philistines,” and not only that, but their own nation were backsliders and under the hand of the heathen as a punishment for every kind of transgression. Then they belonged to the most idolatrous tribe of Israel, for they were Danites, and their nearest and dearest must have been only snares and difficulties to them in their way Zion-ward. The woman was first honoured by the angelic visitor, and words of warning are mingled with the gracious words of promise, “Thou shalt bear a son. Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine, nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing.” The very word “beware” deserves our attention, for it shows that even to a godly woman there was danger. Many a woman gets into bad habits of taking unnecessary stimulants, which ends in utter ruin, because the very idea of danger for her, seems so repugnant to her that she will not “beware,” whereas I firmly believe, that there is not one of us who may not be in danger of this loathsome sin. Another reason is, that women follow too blindly the often careless advice of medical men, in times of weakness, like those spoken of by the angel. The self-denial required from Manoah’s wife is noticeable, too, in another way. By obeying the command from Heaven she was to run exactly counter to the heathen and backsliding ways of those among whom she lived. She, like us, was to show herself one of “a peculiar people.” The woman at

once goes and tells her husband what had happened, and tells him, moreover, in the most exact and open manner. Happy the husband who has a wife thus truthful and confiding, and happy the wife whose husband makes it possible and easy thus to be confided in. Then Manoah's faith' and prayerfulness shine brightly: He does not *say* a prayer—no, he "entreats" God for what he wants!—he wants to be taught how to teach; nor does he want it for himself alone: he says, "Teach *us*" here; and in the whole of this story we have the true oneness of husband and wife beautifully developed—the "We" and the "Us" and the "Our" of happy domestic life. We again have the quickly-answered prayer of faith. God hearkened to the voice of Manoah, and the angel appeared again the same day* to the woman as she sat in the field, doubtless pursuing some of her ordinary household occupations. The first thought is to make her husband a partaker in the honour of this second visit. His mind is so full of his real wants, as it ought to be in all prayer, that he goes at once directly to the point. No doubt of the future crosses his mind, so that he has but to ask, "Lord, how shall we order the child?" There is much beauty in the word "order;" it means the happy middle course between spoiling and scolding which is so difficult to attain to—a calm, firm, kind hand upon the little heart: and the second question is equally a model for the thoughts

* V. 10. "The other day" may be read "*this* day."

and prayers of Christian parents. "What shall be his work?" (Marg.) The Bible says that "Even a child is known by his doings," and each little one from earlier beginning than we wot of, serves the one master or the other. From all he saw around him of the little ones of Dan and of Philistia, Manoah discerned this truth so forcibly, as to make it a serious question for the training of his unborn child. The answer of the angel is one to be deeply pondered by mothers. No rules of future education does he give even to these meek and teachable parents. No; he but reiterates the command for the mother's holiness as if to show that the child who has a holy, self-controlled, obedient mother needs little else. "All that *I* commanded her let her observe." Who is it that thus with such infinite love, and tenderness, and knowledge speaks to this mother expectant? Lay it to heart, O toiling, weary, depressed mothers! It is Jesus—it is the Angel of the Covenant—it is Him in whom all "families" of the earth are promised a blessing. When asked his name, the God-like angel answers that it is Secret, or as we see in the margin, Wonderful, one of the prophetic names given to our Saviour in Isaiah ix. 6, and while Manoah and his wife look on he does "wondrously," till like Jacob at the sunrising, they acknowledge that they have "seen God." What a thought for mothers that He, even before He took on him Mary's nature, should know and provide for, and give tender admoni-

tions for those times of trouble, from which working women, especially, suffer many long and painful consequences! What a motive, too, for preparation for the unborn gifts of God! too often looked on only as new burdens and fresh anxieties, and seldom, oh, how seldom! prepared for by self-denial, faith, and prayer. Throughout this history we have found pre-eminent faith in Manoah's conduct. He is the only father in Scripture who receives the unexpected promise of a child without a shade of doubt. Yet all at once we find him sinking into the valley from the mountain top, and exhibiting the ups and downs which are so frequently found in the faith even of God's dear children. The Jewish belief, that whoever saw God must die, rushes into his mind, and he seems to have been one of those who can believe in the sunshine, but who is damped and discouraged by the shadows. He looks on the darkest side of things, and says at once "we shall *surely* die." Manoah's wife had all along kept in her right place—acting in subordination to her husband, without any mark of elation at her special honours. This very subjection increases her influence, and enables her to come to the help of him who, we may be sure, had so often been her helper in times past. Her words are simple and woman-like. No clever reasoning or deep doctrine, only a touching appeal to God's past mercy and loving-kindness. People "go mourning all their days" who might have the fears

and the shadows put to flight by recalling,—like David in his infirmity,—God's gracious and tender works from the days of old,* and like Paul—that He who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, shall with him also freely give us all things.† “And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson, and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him.” The man who was to be the strongest of mortal men grew up like a lithe willow by the water-courses, and he whose conduct was not always worthy of such a father and mother, yet has his memory embalmed in these fragrant words, “through faith he wrought righteousness, and obtained promises.”‡ Though with some failures and blunders probably, yet the believing parents had ordered their child aright, trained him in the way from which he did not wholly depart, and the work which God had for him to do was faithfully done.

RUTH AND NAOMI.—The Book of Ruth.


We have in this beautiful episode the history of two “lone women.” The real womanliness of both is a striking feature in the narrative. The true and high strength which comes from above is united with the feminine and retiring characteristics which God honours in His Word. Elimelech and Naomi had not shown much faith in their previous history; though, small as it was, it had doubtless been the real precious ore of which even a grain is

* Ps. lxxvii. 10, 11. † Rom. viii. 32. ‡ Heb. xi. 33, 34.

valuable. Because there was a famine in the land, Elimelech left Bethlehem, the "House of Bread," to seek a new home amidst the Moabites, forgetting that the bread-Giver could supply their wants in His own appointed land as well as among the heathen. The usual results follow. One bereavement after another recalls the widowed mother to a sense of her sin, and a failure of bread in her adopted country evidently inclines her heart still more to the House of Bread, where she heard the Lord was visiting His people. Like the prodigal son, she longed to return where there was bread enough and to spare, and she "arose" like him to return from her backslidings. The widows of Mahlon and Chilion escort her so far on her way, and then she pauses to say Farewell! It is evident that each had been a good, kind, and dutiful wife and daughter, and it is beautiful to notice in Naomi's short address to them the mixture of affection, deserved praise, and prayer. Ah, how far a little more of those three elements would go to sweeten home and family life! The one difference between these two sisters-in-law is so noteworthy that we must pause upon it. Both young and widowed, both well-conducted, and with the best of external characters, both full of affection and kindness, what is the distinction? More surely than the mere fact that one sister went back to her own mother, and the other went on with her mother-in-law. The exquisite adjuration of Ruth, household

word as it is, is not sufficient to account for the obscurity which befalls the one, and the honour which crowns the other. No! There is a far deeper and higher reason. Ruth, through the affection she bears her husband's mother, has been led to take her God as her own God, while poor, kindly, well-behaved Orpah has no thoughts beyond the false gods of her heathen people. It is, in fact, the difference of CONVERSION, that great change which places a gulf between the best outwardly behaved, as well as the vilest sinners. The firmness of Ruth's character, both in her love for her mother-in-law and in her confession of her new faith, comes out very decidedly—so much so, that Naomi ceases to argue with her, and the two unprotected women go on their long and weary journey. Safely, however, they two went until they came to Bethlehem. Even in the face of this great mercy, and forgetting the "pleasant child" thus unexpectedly bestowed upon her, Naomi shows plainly that her faith is not much stronger than when she went forth with her husband. Hard thoughts she indulges of her heavenly Father—"very bitterly" does she think the God of love has treated her. Which of us can throw a stone at Naomi for this? A man of prayer confessed that one day he had prayed fifteen times before he subdued a hard thought of God; but how often we let the hard thoughts go, and if we pray one unsuccessful prayer we think we have done well in the way of resistance.

We, like Naomi, have to learn like Job, to "receive" the evil as the good, knowing that both alike come from the same loving hand and heart. Nothing is more encouraging to us weak ones, than the wonderful way in which the Lord rewards those of little faith, even while He rebukes and chastens them. Not only were the two women brought safely back, but they came to Bethlehem at the very best time for poor hungry wanderers, "at the beginning of barley harvest." Although Ruth and Naomi had wealthy people belonging to them, and were highly connected, yet no thought of idleness or exclusiveness entered their heads. To earn her bread with diligence, and thus to support her mother, was Ruth's first thought. God's management, which she had the wisdom to trust as better than her own, arranged everything for her, and though unknown to each other, she and a noble kinsman are brought face to face. Boaz's advice to Ruth is a lesson to us all, "Let thine eyes be on the field." Each of us have a field to sow, plant, and reap, whatever sort of field it may be, and our eyes are apt to wander off to other people's fields, and to covet other work than our own. Ruth had the good sense not to be affronted at this advice, and more than that, she followed it—two rather uncommon circumstances in daily life. With all Ruth's firmness of purpose, she had the beautiful combination of deep humility. Her astonishment at the grace shown to her is an exemplification of the proverb,



"It is good for women to keep a low sail;" and the answer of Boaz brings out the interesting fact that her affection for her mother, and her conversion to the true faith, had been widely known and spoken of. Each individual, however lowly they may think themselves, is in reality surrounded by a "cloud of witnesses," upon whom their actions react for good or for evil. The thoroughness and whole-heartedness of Ruth's conversion is beautifully alluded to by Boaz: "The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust." It is a favourite simile of Scripture that of the safety, shelter, and warmth of the bird-mother wings;—how it appeals to the heart of woman! and how condescending of the great God to use such a homely figure!* It is not, alas! so common for poor, weary, shelterless ones to put as thorough a trust and to come as entirely *under* the wings as did Ruth; but all who do so find the same blessing. Let us not be one day outside the warm feathers, cold and comfortless, the next, nestling within, as if we would never again wander, and then again out and away! Let us get under, and **KEEP** under the tender covering.

Ruth's daily conduct in her new home is exactly the conduct to be expected from one who thus consistently "abides" under the protection of God's wings. It is marked by activity, diligence, economy,

* Read Dent. xxxii. 11; Ps. xvii. 8; Ps. lxxiii. 7; Matt. xxiii. 37.

modesty, steadiness, home affection, and willingness to listen to good advice. The story which follows is, indeed, a strange one to us, but it was in strict accordance with Jewish manners and customs, and was undertaken at the desire of the dignified and decorous Naomi. It brings before us, too, a fine testimony to the modest life and proper conduct of Ruth: "for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman" are the words of Boaz. One piece of advice given by Naomi is so excellent that we must notice it in passing:—"Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall." In many affairs of life, when we have done all that is necessary, our truest strength is to "sit still,"* instead of marring what has been already done, and wasting our own time and strength by useless anxiety and sinful impatience. In the law of Moses† we find the curious ceremony of the loosing of the shoe in connection with the property and the widow of a deceased brother. This was not the only occasion in Jewish life in which the shoe or slipper was made a sign and symbol. It was the custom, doubtless originated by this Mosaic ceremony, for a bridegroom at a wedding to strike slightly the bride with a shoe on the nape of the neck, in token of her passing into a state of subjection,—a very distasteful doctrine in these days,—although unconsciously perpetuated in Scotland by the nearly universal custom of throwing old shoes after the bride! Ruth had no

* Isa. xxx. 7.

† Deut. xxv. 7—10.

property, and the next of kin did not wish to burden himself with a poor stranger widow, so that Boaz, the rich and the noble kinsman, comes forward and purchases Ruth in her poverty and desolation to be his honoured wife. Beautiful type of the Lord Jesus Christ, who, when other helpers there are none, lifts up, and purchases with His own blood, the poor, lonely sinner, and makes Himself the head and the husband of the Church of saved ones. The history of Ruth's marriage is given with more particularity than is usual in Scripture, doubtless because of her relationship to David the king, and to the Son of David, the King of Heaven. Ruth the Moabitess was the great grandmother of David, and her husband's prayer for her was answered; the Lord her God gave her a "full reward" for the faith and trust which He had enabled her to exercise. Nor is Naomi's spiritual progress less satisfactory. The dark time had been gradually passing from her soul, and we find her full of gratitude and faith even before the fullest blessing came, while we leave her with that best of comforts to Jewish hearts,—a little adopted nursling in her bosom, who was to be to her "a restorer of her life," and "a nourisher of her old age." This child's name, signifying "he serves," was to go down to all time as an ancestor of Jesus Christ, "who being in the form of God . . . took upon Himself the form of a servant."*

* Phil. ii. 7.

MARY AND ELIZABETH.—Luke i. 38—56.

These two Jewish matrons, in their beauty, dignity, and single-mindedness, are worthy followers of Ruth and Naomi. We shall not enter into the details of their separate marvellous histories and honours, but only give a short sketch of their lives where for a short space they mingle in fulness of joy and gratitude. These two women realized and profited by feminine counsel and communion in a very marked way. It is the lesson we are, doubtless, intended to draw from this record of their united history, and it is a lesson we greatly need. "Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda, and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elizabeth." Her faith, joy, and wonder could find no outlet till she could pour it into the heart of a female friend. Probably she had no kindred spirit among the Nazarene women, and so she grudged not distance, fatigue, and rough, hilly travel in order to obtain the blessing she sought. Neither was it simply the relief of talking about the strange event that had happened, nor the still more strange that was to happen. No, it was for the purpose of interchanging real spiritual help and comfort. That the Lord blessed it in this way most abundantly is very evident. The promise and the fact stood as firm to the Judean women as to the believers in the days of Malachi, and in our nineteenth century; "they that feared the Lord spake often one to

another, and the Lord hearkened and heard." When her friend approached and saluted Elizabeth, two marked effects followed. "She was filled with the Holy Ghost," and "she spake out with a loud voice." Her knowledge of Mary's already strong faith kindles her own, and she further strengthens it by her own vivid knowledge that there shall be a performance of the promised wonders. Much mingled feeling must have oppressed Mary during her hasty and dangerous journey; but, strengthened and comforted, she now bursts into an unmingled song of thanksgiving. Her soul is now able to magnify the Lord, and her spirit now rejoices, not so much in the promised Child to the Virgin Mother, in the Messiah to the Jewish nation, as in the coming salvation to herself a sinner. Her Son, Jesus Christ, was to be her Saviour as much as ours, and with the same appropriating faith she sings, "MY spirit hath rejoiced in God MY Saviour." Mary enjoyed three months of happy, holy communion with her cousin Elizabeth, and then, strengthened and refreshed, she returned over the hills to her own home. That there is a reality of blessing to be experienced from the intercourse of those who are sisters in Christ, and sisters also in many special trials and difficulties, is known to all who have tried the experiment. It would be a good thing if there were more of it among cottage mothers and women. Often when there are only "two or three" Christian women in a village or district, it

never occurs to them to meet together for prayer and reading the Scriptures, and taking counsel together about their children. They are glad to go to church meetings, or to mothers' meetings conducted by ladies and Bible-women; but to meet by twos and threes, and pray themselves, would seem to them the height of presumption. Yet they little know how much blessing they lose in their homes and their families, and how much help they might give by their prayers, weak and stammering though they may be, to the ministers and ladies whose meetings they attend at other times. False shame and a fear of others, and a bad notion that prayer consists in fine words, are at the root of the backwardness. These foes to real spiritual progress were nobly put to flight in a female prayer meeting of which I have heard. When asked how they managed, the simple answer was, "Oh, they who can pray, DO, and those who can't pray, TRY!"

MARTHA AND MARY.—Luke x. 38—42.

These two sisters were honoured by the friendship of Jesus, and it must never be forgotten that Jesus loved them equally; nay, that Martha, the very one so tenderly, though so openly rebuked, comes first, for it is said that "Jesus loved Martha and Mary." They may be taken as the portraits of two classes of female workers, as distinctly different now as the sisters of Bethany, and both, like them, "loved" by

“Jesus.” The doctrinal and spiritual aspects of the narrative have been so often dwelt upon both in sermons and books that I shall only look at one or two practical lessons which may help us in our daily Christian work. Three of Martha’s faults seem to have descended pretty abundantly to her representatives of to-day. One is the custom of hard judgments. Sad it is to hear fellow workers—especially when they are women who know what it is to work in much weakness—speak hardly and unjustly of those who they cannot deny are sisters in Christ. We cannot fulfil the commands of Scripture that “we suffer not sin upon our neighbours,”* and that we “tell our brother his fault between him and us alone,”† without some measure of judgment and trial of “the spirits;”‡ but our Martha-like fault is that we judge judgments of our sisters, without pausing to consider whether they are *true, tender, and necessary*. In these light and frivolous days we oftentimes hear even Christian women fall into an aggravation of this fault, which certainly Martha was not guilty of; there is a satirical, would-be witty style of speaking of the faults and weaknesses of others, which is deeply injurious to those who so speak. Trial of the spirits to be scriptural and to be valuable must ever be earnest—deeply, tenderly earnest. I must indulge myself by quoting the following exquisite poem nearly entire :

* Lev. xix. 17.

† Matt. xviii. 15.

‡ 1 John iv. 1.

- “Where hast been toiling all day, sweet-heart,
That thy brow is burdened and sad ?
The Master's work may make weary feet,
But it leaves the spirit glad.
- “Was thy garden nipped with the midnight frost,
Or scorched with the midday glare ?
Were thy vines laid low, or thy lilies crushed,
That thy face is so full of care ?”
- “No pleasant garden toils were mine ;
I have sat on the judgment seat,
Where the Master sits at eve and calls
The children round His feet.”
- “How camest thou on the judgment seat,
Sweet-heart? Who set thee there ?
'Tis a lonely and lofty seat for thee,
And well might fill thee with care.”
- “I climbed on the judgment seat myself,
I have sat there alone all day,
For it grieved me to see the children around
Idling their life away.
- “They wasted the Master's precious seed,
They wasted the precious hours ;
They trained not the vines, nor gathered the fruits,
And they trampled the sweet, meek flowers.”
- “But how fared thy garden plot, sweet-heart,
Whilst thou sat'st on the judgment seat ?
Who watered thy roses and trained thy vines,
And kept them from careless feet ?”
- “Nay, that is saddest of all to me,
That is saddest of all !
My vines are trailing, my roses are parched,
My lilies droop and fall.”
- “Go back to thy garden plot, sweet-heart !
Go back till the evening falls !
And bind thy lilies and train thy vines,
Till for thee the Master calls.

“Go, make thy garden fair as thou canst,
Thou workest never alone;
Perchance he whose plot is next to thine
Will see it and mend his own.

“And the next may copy his, sweet-heart,
Till all grows fair and sweet,
And when the Master comes at eve,
Happy faces His coming will greet.

“Then shall thy joy be full, sweet-heart,
In the garden so fair to see,
In the Master's words of praise for all,
In a look of His own for thee!”*

Another of Martha's faults was taking a false view of work. She thought that Mary was not working because she was sitting still. She did not see that her sister was not only preparing for the higher work which Jesus called her to afterwards, but that she was doing the actual present work of honouring her Lord's teaching before those who only cared for His miracles. No; Martha's one idea was, that because Mary was not doing *her* kind of work, therefore she was not working at all—a very common aspect of fault-finding. If Martha had looked at herself instead of at Mary, she might have seen the faults which have been so obvious to all ages, and thus have had more correct views of her sister's good service. Again, Martha did not know how to cease working. She did not understand, like Mary, that what was quite right at one time might be quite wrong at another—that if she

* By the authoress of the “Three Wakings and the Schonburgh-Cotta Family.”

had served less and not been cumbered about it at all, she might have "made time" for sitting with Mary at the Master's feet. We see this very much when workers are set apart by illness; they speak of their work with despair, as if it must be ruined by being left apparently undone, and cannot trust Him with it who has appointed a time to work, and a time to refrain from working. Others again leave themselves no time for taking spiritual food, but rush into a constant press of good work, and give as a reason for what is really damaging and weakening all their powers of service, "that the work is there, and somebody must do it;" forgetting that there is "a good part" in each servant's service which shall not, and must not be taken away. Every servant must take time to sit at the feet of Jesus and hear His word, or woe be to that servant's work, however fair and fervent it seems.

Again, Martha's tongue led her much astray. She talked about her work, and in a covert manner praised herself. Out of seven sayings recorded of the two sisters, only one is due to Mary. "The talk of the lips tendeth to penury" applies as much, if not more, to spiritual work than to other circumstances of life. How often our tongues "sound a trumpet before us when we do righteousnesses"!* thereby rendering it impossible for the left hand to be in ignorance of what the right hand doeth, in accordance with the

* Matt. vi. 1, 2. (Marg.)

command of the Saviour. We may well take a lesson from Martha, however, in other ways than looking at her faults. Martha, like her successors, was a woman of a notable, self-denying, energetic nature, but she added that which comes not by nature but by grace. She profited by the Master's reproof. Though with some characteristic bits of her old self peeping out, Martha's conduct at the raising of Lazarus shows high advances in Christian faith and knowledge; while the last time that we meet with her in the sacred narrative we find her meekly still "serving," and that quite "alone," having evidently learned her true place, and how to fill it with a right spirit. Mary, so far from being a type of non-workers, is really the most perfect example of a female worker of which we read. Mary's work was pronounced "good" by her Master, and it was ordained to be preached in all the world as a memorial of her, the humble, quiet worker. Martha's descendants take decidedly after her faults, but the faults of our Maries are entirely their own, for Mary left no recorded faults to take as an example. The Maries of to-day seem almost to dislike their bustling, active sisters, and are quite as much disposed to harsh judgments. Then while they truly love "to sit still in the house," and sing hymns, and attend prayer meetings, they are not always, like Mary, ready to rise quickly when the Master calleth. They like to go through the preparatory stage for work, talk a great deal of waiting on the Lord, and read and

meditate on his Word to a faultless extent; but with all this they often fail in the active and self-denying work, which, as in the case of Mary, will be assuredly given to crown the long preparation. Let all Marthas and Maries learn from each other, bear with each other, admire truly each other, look each at her own faults and not at her sister's, and we shall have an immense strengthening and welding together of our forces.

DORCAS.—Acts ix. 36—42.

What a loveable woman Dorcas must have been! We seem to see her sitting beside her work-basket, planning and contriving all the coats and garments for the poor and needy. Her very name is pleasant-sounding and graceful. It means "gazelle," and there is still a Syrian variety of that pretty animal which, it is said, receives her name. This we may take as a little token of the permitted union of gracefulness and use in our feminine occupations. A woman who cannot use her needle is well nigh as useless as a digger that does not know what to do with his spade, or as a soldier who cannot wield his sword. It is a great instrument of use, happiness, and comfort. Not exactly the needle that does nothing but thread beads or "make holes and sew them up again," or go out and in of fine canvas, though even that degree of feminine employment is better than nothing, and may be turned to some good account. But the real

true needle, which is a well-tried and well-tempered weapon, belongs to the woman who first of all uses it when there is need-be for household work as "for the Lord," and then, like Dorcas, for the use of "saints and widows." Dorcas was "FULL of good works and almsdeeds"—how different from our emptiness of them—just doing as few as we think *will do*, or comparing them with our neighbours and quite satisfied if we do rather more than they. It is beautiful to see how peculiarly honoured and mourned for was this very humble and feminine disciple. When she was laid on a bed of death, two men are sent for Peter, who at once goes on this errand of so much consequence to the Church, and he finds in that upper chamber a very touching scene, for "all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them." From this exhibition we may gather that Dorcas chiefly did almsdeeds by means of her needle, and that she was one of those who had more time than money to bestow. Many a contrivance, therefore we may be sure she had to think of before she could make the "two ends" of her charities meet. Many a thing, like Jeannie Walker, would she "gar do" for herself, that she might give the money or the extra cloth to her poor ones. Many a fragment and scrap would she "gather up" in obedience to her dear Lord's command in order to piece together some warm and comfortable garment. There

seems also great probability that Dorcas was not one who could speak much for Jesus, but she certainly sewed for Him, and the consequence was that the good name she thus acquired made her wonderful restoration known through all Joppa, and "many believed in the Lord."

PRISCILLA.—Acts xviii.

We know several interesting things of Priscilla and her husband—and their happy, busy, tent-making home seems quite familiar to us. Lately come from Italy, driven by persecution from their old Roman home, they have made for themselves the new home hallowed by faith, industry, and happy family affection. A very intelligent, intellectual circle it must have been, for Paul chose it as a congenial sphere; and though he sanctified all his wonderful acquirements to the cross, yet his choice implies that the heads of the household were well instructed and companionable. It is not as the companions of Paul, however, that I desire now to look at this pair, nor because of the Church which they gathered in their house, (in times when all knew that that term meant something more and deeper than stone and lime, or creed, or denomination,) nor for the sound Scriptural teaching and hospitality which they were able to bestow upon the eloquent Apollos of Alexandria, nor the great debt of gratitude felt and expressed by the Apostle and Churches of the Gentiles; no, nor even their zeal and love in

risking their very lives for their friend. It is a much more simple and homely thing that I wish to point out. That little word, "and"—Aquila *and* Priscilla. We never hear of them apart—the work, secular and spiritual, and the help, and the influence of this married couple is ever at one. They always "pull together." A great deal of separation of interests and work goes on now-a-days, and this is not only confined to fashionable circles and sensation novels. We find it in many a respectable household and Christian family, where there is not a shadow of unkindness. Only the one spirit and the one service does not fully and entirely occupy both. It is probable that Aquila and Priscilla did not always think precisely alike, and circumstances might arise in which different parts of the same work might call them in different directions, but they were still so essentially one, that the Holy Spirit in His Scriptural history only recognises them as "Aquila **AND** Priscilla." The friends of the one were the friends of the other. No separate friendships or "spiritual affinities" are recorded, and it is this which makes Priscilla's position, as in some sense the teacher of Apollos, a true and safe one. It was done in the shelter of home and with her husband ;—"whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, **THEY** took him unto them and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly." The neglect of this safe and blessed little conjunction **AND** produces great want of confidence, false independence, and many evils in domestic life,—

and when carried to a sad and strange extreme has produced among Christians most strange and monstrous forms of heresy in America, Germany, and even in England.

These are but a few of the interesting and life-like portraits of our sex to be found by name scattered throughout the Scriptures. There are other nameless ones alluded to, "honourable women not a few," also those women mentioned by Paul in his Epistle to the Philippians, whose names are specially recorded as being fellow-labourers in the Gospel, and whose names ARE in the Book of Life.* No good work for God, no true help given to His saints, *can* there be till we are ourselves written in the book of the slain Lamb.† No entrance into life save by the blood, no record in the Book save through the Lamb, no work for the Lord that will bide the fire, save by His Redeemed. Let us not be like "Noah's carpenters," who built the ark, and were swept away by the flood, but let us work with our own feet safe on the rock to which we desire to draw the sinking. Then will the work here, and the rest hereafter,—the service on earth, though in some darkness and many tears, and the service in Heaven, where "the servants shall see 'the Master's' face,"—be all one and the same thing—blessed manifestations of His unchanging LOVE to us in making us His servants, and teaching us to work for Him.

* Phil. iv. 3.

† Rev. xiii. 8.

" We are like to servants
In their Master's hall ;
Busied with their daily work,
Waiting for His call.

On the roof above us
Rows of bells are hung,
One by one they summon each,
With their clam'rous tongue.

Then the servant bidden
Saith, "*That rings for me;*"
Leaveth off his present toil,
Whatever it may be,

Smootheth his apparel,
Looks a farewell round,
Passeth from his fellows
While the bell doth sound,

Mounteth up the staircase,
To his Lord doth go,
Tarrieth in the upper rooms,
Comes no more below.

" Oh ! to be up yonder,
Pressing near to God ! "

DAILY COMFORT IN DAILY TRIAL.

- “ WHY do you gaze on high, mother,
 Why do you gaze on high ?
 Are you looking for the sunset
 To blush across the sky ?”
- “ I look not for the gold, children,
 Nor for the crimson bright,
 But I watch the little clouds, children,
 So full of living light.”
- “ What do you think upon, mother,
 What do you think upon,
 When your eyes are bright and glistening,
 As if the sunbeam shone ?”
- “ I think of Him who comes, children,
 Upon the clouds of heaven ;
 I think of the ‘ weight of glory ’
 Then to His people given.”
- “ When your work is hard and sore, mother,
 Sore upon head and limb,
 How is your voice so glad, mother,
 As you sing that happy hymn ?”
- “ I am waiting for the call, children,
 I am ‘ hasting ’ on the day ;
 My voice cannot be mute, children,
 Lest I keep my Lord away.”
- “ When cometh the weary pain, mother,
 And the nerves oppress you so,
 When the doctor orders you rest, mother,
 What whisper you soft and low ?”
- “ I whisper blessed words, children,
 To my heart so full of fear,
 I shall rest for ever, children,
 When cometh the Saviour dear.”

"When they tell of the Fenian fires, mother,
And the famine creeping on,
How can you look so calm, mother,
As you hear of the dead and gone?"

"I hope for the better news, children,
That will soothe the ruffled air,
When the trumpet music, children,
Tells that the Lord is there."

"When ~~Jem~~ is wild and rough, mother,
And we are wayward too,
When the neighbours fight and swear, mother,
Why sorrow as ye do?
That is not such a grief, mother,
As the death of little May,
And it can't be half so sad, mother,
As when father went away."

"The father and the babe, children,
Are safe, so safe in heaven;
They will meet me in the air, children,
When soon the clouds are riven;
But I weep lest you, my children,
In the morn, or eve, or noon,
Should hear the rush of the chariot-wheels,
And cry, 'Too soon, too soon!'" M. M. G.

CONCLUSION.

